

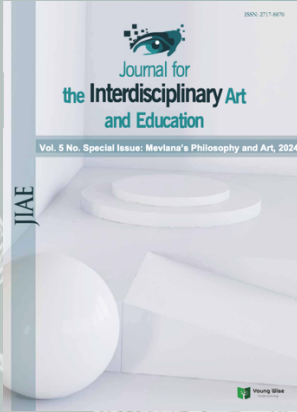


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From the Editor

It is with great pleasure that we are unveiling this special issue of the Journal for the Interdisciplinary Art and Education solely focuses on the discussion of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi's philosophy and its various implications in art. For centuries the spirit of Mevlana which emphasizes love, tolerance, unity and the human being's constant search for the divine has spread across cultures and disciplines. His influence is not limited to geographical, linguistic and temporal contexts which is why one should watch the performance with an emphasis on how it reflects the essential human experiences that are described by his verses.

This issue consists of articles written by scholars and practitioners coming from various fields, including visual arts, music, poetry, fashion design, semiotics, and artificial intelligence to discuss the relevance of Mevlana's thoughts. All of the papers raise issues and questions to current knowledge and practices and combine history with contemporary approaches. Altogether, these contributions serve to emphasize the importance of art as a means of expressing ideas that are in line with those of Mevlana such as unity, contemplation and love.

The first paper, Analysis of Sultan Veled's garments and the Mevlevi rituals from a fashion art prescriptive by Arife Aktaş and the second paper, Refashioning Mevlevi clothes with the help of artificial intelligence by Mustafa Oğuz Gök shows that clothes and rituals which are considered as unchangeable parts of culture can be updated and given a new meaning by using the latest innovations.

Going further with the theme of innovation and the interface of tradition and contemporarity, Ünal Bastaban and Savaş Sarıhan in The effects of Mevlana's philosophy on aesthetics and art: innovative interpretations inspired by the past explain how Rumi's works are still a rich source for new aesthetic ideas. In a similar manner, Ayça Aydoğan Kaymaz and Eren Akoğlu consider The Poetic limits of AI to explore how computational processes align and conflict with our perceptions of Mevlana's poetic imagery.

In two contributions, Mevlana's teachings as visualized are discussed, where the visual aspect of Mevlana's teachings is the focus of two contributions: Mert Yavaşca's From the middle ages to the present, the representation of the Rumi theme in paintings demonstrates how the theme has been presented across different historical periods and artistic styles. The second paper, Sufi Aesthetics and Semiotics: Visual Representations of Mevlana's Philosophy in the Works of Mutluhan Taş by Nurdan Çolpan and Ali Ertuğrul Küpeli explores how the symbolic forms represent the mystical concepts in the contemporary art practice.

In performance and musical traditions, Firat Altun presents The musical representation of unity, divine love and inner journey in Graham Hair's Sufi Couplets which shows how music can express the intangible aspects of Mevlana's teachings. The book review by Mehmet Alan, A critique of the book entitled "Musikî in Ottoman Empire as Seen by the European Travellers" in relation to Mevlevi music also contributes to this discussion and brings back the memory that the history and the cultural exchange that underlies the Mevlevi music.

Last but not the least, Hasan Said Tortop's An analysis of the trends in thesis research focused on 'Mevlana's Philosophy and Art' in Turkey provides a step back: highlighting the evolution of the focus of the scholarship and the new directions for future research.

This collection of articles evidences the relevance and liveliness of Mevlana's philosophical ideas in the arts, which prove how artistic activity is able to preserve, develop and expand the notions about the world. We would like to thank all the authors for their excellent work, the reviewers for their valuable feedback, and

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the readers for joining us in this exciting process. It is our hope that these pages will lead to new conversations and actions that cross borders, cultures, and spirits following in the spirit of Mevlana.

Dr Firat Altun
Special Issue Editor





Research Article

Examination of Mevlevi rituals and garments attributed to Sultan Veled from a fashion art perspective

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the clothing worn by Mevlevi during the ritual, the accessories, and the garments attributed to Sultan Veled, the son of Mevlana, the founder of the Mevlevi tradition, from the perspective of fashion arts. These garments, which are heritage from the Seljuk period, have not been sufficiently researched and examined in terms of clothing arts. It is observed from the literature review that there are not many publications providing information about these garments. Additionally, no research has been found concerning pattern preparation and garment application techniques related to the Mevlevi garments and those attributed to Sultan Veled from the perspective of clothing arts. These garments, which possess different characteristics in terms of fabric, model, cutting, materials used, sewing techniques, and decoration, should be documented with technical information, photographs, and drawings. In this direction, a literature review and interviews with key informants have been conducted. The model, cutting, sewing, fabric, lining, and decoration features of the garments and accessories worn by the Mevlevi during their ritual and the two garments attributed to Sultan Veled, which are part of the Mevlana Museum collection, have been examined. Patterns have been extracted from the examined garments. To overcome storage difficulties, the patterns were reduced in scale while remaining faithful to the originals. Each garment was photographed, and the body, collar, sleeves, and closure characteristics were examined based on the pattern drawings. The garments were documented with photographs, examining their fabric, lining, color, decoration, auxiliary materials, and sewing features. The tennure, worn by Mevlevi during the ritual, is white. The garment extends just below the ankle, has no lining, and is characterized by simplicity in its model and cut. A black belt called *Elif-i Nemed* is tied around the waist of the tennure, and a *Deste-Gül* is worn over it. The last layer worn over the sema tennure is the *Hırka* (robe). The *Deste-Gül* attributed to Sultan Veled is cream-colored, made of cotton fabric, lined, and decorated with various verses. The robe is made of dark pink patterned silk fabric, with a pistachio green silk lining. It has a loose fit with princess seams and kimono sleeves extending from the princess seams. The collar of the garment is a "chemise collar." It is suggested that this fashion art, which emerged with Mevlana's philosophy, should be further researched by researchers in this field and fashion designers, leading to new applications.

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Introduction

Mevlana and his philosophy have been one of the significant artistic movements that have influenced various fields such as literature, music, architecture, gastronomy, fashion design, and dance, both during his time and in the present day.

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Examining the impact of Mevlana's philosophy on art is crucial for understanding its profound and multifaceted influence across different disciplines. In this context, the fundamental concepts of Mevlana's thought will be explored in detail.

The philosophy of Mevlana has created an intellectual movement based on the adoption of his ideas and thoughts. It is noted that this movement was primarily systematized by Sultan Veled (Öztuna, 1974). The acceptance of Mevlana's philosophy and acting in accordance with those ideas can be described as "Mevlevilik" (Mevlevi Order) (TDK, 2024). Gönül (2004) defines Mevlevilik as an intellectual movement that began to take shape after Mevlana's death during the time of his son, Sultan Veled. This movement revolves around Mevlana's life philosophy and worldview, aiming to sustain a journey of spiritual love and knowledge. İnançer (2002) mentions that Mevlana's philosophy is a Turkish intellectual movement that originated in Konya and spread globally.

Following Mevlana's death, it became necessary to spread his profound ideas worldwide and call people towards love, tolerance, virtue, righteousness, and good morals. His beloved son, Sultan Veled, dedicated his life to preserving Mevlana's teachings, which led to the institutionalization of Mevlevilik during his era. In this regard, Sultan Veled is considered the founder of the Mevlevi Order (Yeniterzi, 1997, pp. 95-96).

Mevlana's original name is Muhammad Jalaluddin, while "Mevlana" and "Rumi" are titles given to him later. The term "Mevlana," meaning "our master," was used as a mark of respect, while "Rumi," referring to the region of "Diyar-ı Rum" (Anatolia), denotes the fact that he lived and passed away in this region (Karaköse, 2006, p. 9). Hidayetoğlu (2003, pp. 3-4) points out that Mevlana was born in the ancient Turkish cultural center of Balkh, located in present-day Afghanistan, with his birth date recorded as 30 September 1207 (6 Rabi' al-Awwal, 604 AH).

Mevlana's mother was Mümine Hatun, and his father was Muhammad Bahauddin. Baha Veled was a prominent scholar of his time, known as "Sultan al-Ulama" (Büyükbayraktar, 2005, p. 13). Due to the threat posed by the Mongols, Sultan al-Ulama left Balkh with his family and followers in 1212-1213, traveling through Baghdad, Mecca, and finally reaching Karaman (Hidayetoğlu, 2003, p. 8). The family settled in Karaman in 1222 and stayed there for seven years. In 1225, Mevlana married Gevher Hatun, the daughter of Şerafeddin Lala, in Karaman (Mevlana, 2024). In the years following his marriage, he lost his mother Mümine Hatun and his brother Muhammad Alaaddin. From his marriage with Gevher Hatun, Mevlana had two sons, Bahaddin Veled and Muhammad Alaaddin. After Gevher Hatun's early death, Mevlana later married Kerra Hatun in Konya. He had two more children with Kerra Hatun, but one of his sons passed away at a young age (Çelebi, 1957, p. 45).

During this period, most of Anatolia was under Seljuk rule, and Konya was adorned with art, scholars, and artisans. Responding to the call of Sultan Alaeddin Keykubad, Baha Veled moved from Karaman to Konya, where he spent the remainder of his life (Mevlana, 2024). Baha Veled lived in Konya for about three years before passing away in 628 AH, at which point Mevlana was 24 years old and took over the responsibilities of his father's madrasas (Duru, 1952, p. 31). A year later, Tirmidhi Seyyid Burhanuddin came to Konya to meet his late spiritual leader. Realizing Mevlana's foundational religious education from his father, Burhanuddin guided Mevlana's spiritual training and encouraged him to complete his education in Aleppo and Damascus (Karaismailoğlu, 1998, p. 48).

Gölpınarlı (1973) mentions that Mevlana met Shams al-Din Muhammad of Tabriz in Konya on 23 October 1244, an event that occurred twelve years after his father's death and marked a turning point in his life (p. 9). According to sources, Shams al-Din of Tabriz was born in 1164 in Tabriz, with ancestors said to be of Iranian-Turkish descent. Shams' father was named Ali, and his grandfather was Malekddad of Tabriz. Shams was the disciple of Abu Bakr-e Zenbillaf, a basket-weaver in Tabriz (Lermioğlu, 2002, p. 37).

Shams' arrival deeply affected Mevlana's spiritual world, transforming him into a true man of the heart. Mevlana had previously encountered Shams once during his student days in Damascus, when Shams had mysteriously disappeared after telling him, "O master of the world, find me" (Önder, 1967, p. 335). Shams did not become a mentor to Mevlana; rather, Mevlana took Shams as his own mentor (Gölpınarlı, 1973, p. 10). After Shams' sudden disappearance in 1247, Mevlana devoted himself fully to poetry, the practice of Sema, and the spiritual maturation of those around him (Önder, 1967, p. 335).

After Shams, Mevlana nurtured and chose his two closest companions and successors himself. The first of these was the goldsmith Salahaddin, later known as Salahaddin Zerkubi, who was older than Mevlana and admired for his purity of heart. Mevlana found peace and tranquility in his presence, choosing him as his spiritual successor. After Salahaddin's death, Mevlana's next successor was Çelebi Hüsameddin, who served Mevlana faithfully and played a significant role in the writing of the Masnavi (Uz, 2004, pp. 20-21). Mevlana's life, summarized in his Divan-e Kabir as "I was raw, I cooked, I burned," ended on 17 December 1273 (Atasoy, 2005, p. 103).

Sultan Veled and Mevlevilik

"Do not search for our tombs on earth after our death! Our graves are in the hearts of the wise," said Mevlana before his passing. After Mevlana's death, his eldest son Bahaddin Veled, later known as Sultan Veled, along with his sister Melike Hatun, continued to uphold the teachings of Mevlana (Çelebi, 1957, p. 45).

Known as Bahaddin by Mevlana and his close circle, Sultan Veled was born on 24 April 1226 in Karaman. After losing his mother at a young age, he was raised by his stepmother, Kerra Hatun (Lermioğlu, 2002, p. 43). At the age of ten, Veled began attending gatherings with his father, and many mistook him for Mevlana's brother. Mevlana affectionately remarked, "You resemble me more than anyone else in terms of nature and morals," and thus gave him both his name and epithet (Eflaki, 1986, p. 35). Veled married Fatima Hatun, the daughter of Selahaddin Zerkubi, one of Mevlana's closest disciples. They had children: Ulu Arif Çelebi, Âbide Mutahhara Hatun, and Saraf Arife Hatun. From his second and third marriages, he had other children, including Şemseddin Emir Âbid Efendi, Vâcid Efendi, and Selahaddin Emir Zahid (Wikipedia, 2024).

Mevlana did not claim the title of sheikh or establish an official group during his lifetime (Çelebi, 1957, p. 196). Historical records show that Mevlana's writings do not reference specific groups or their leaders. Throughout his life, Mevlana did not adhere to the set rules of existing groups, nor did he become their practitioner or follower (Gönül, 2004, p. 1). Seven days after Mevlana's death, Çelebi Hüsameddin insisted that Sultan Veled assume his father's position, declaring him the rightful heir due to his wisdom and spiritual maturity. However, Sultan Veled, acknowledging his role as his father's successor and esteemed friend, appointed Çelebi Hüsameddin to the position and followed him for many years (Lermioğlu, 2002, p. 44). After Çelebi Hüsameddin's death in 683/1284, Bektemüroğlu Şeyh Kerimeddin led for seven years. Upon his passing, Sultan Veled assumed leadership, establishing the tradition of Mevlana's descendants, the Çelebis, leading the group (Atasoy, 2005, p. 104).

Sultan Veled dedicated his entire life to preserving Mevlana's teachings and spiritual path, formally organizing Mevlevilik with its unique discipline (Yeniterzi, 2007, p. 135). Lermioğlu (2002) states that Sultan Veled not only established Mevlevilik but also clarified and spread his father's teachings widely. His innovations included structuring the ritual of the Mevlevi Sema and undertaking extensive travels to promote Mevlevilik. Sultan Veled passed away in Konya on 10 Rajab 712 (11 November 1312) (Islamic Thought Atlas, 2024).

Mevlevilik, founded in Mevlana's name, is characterized by its lack of rigid structures and rituals. It blends Mevlana's humanistic views and philosophical teachings with mysticism, surrounding and shaping thought through ceremonies while retaining its essence (Gölpınarlı, 1952, p. 186). The evolution of Mevlevilik from the Seljuk era into the Ottoman period carried many cultural traits from Seljuk civilization, evident in clothing, art, literature, language, and customs (Çelebi, 1957, p. 147). Centered in Konya, Mevlevi lodges were established in various parts of Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt. From the 16th century onward, during the Ottoman era, the character of Mevlevilik changed, with the most significant lodges being founded by princes and high-ranking officials. Ottoman sultans showed immense respect for Mevlevi sheikhs and elders. During this era, Mevlevilik reached its peak (Meyerovitch, n.d., p. 113). Until it was transformed into a museum in 1927, the Konya Mevlevi Lodge was led by 32 Çelebis (Atasoy, 2005, p. 104). Today, both domestically and internationally, Mevlevilik continues to be highly regarded, with admiration for it growing each passing day.

History of Mevlevi Attire

Atasoy (2005) states that Mevlevilik became systematized and institutionalized after Mevlana, with the formalization of Mevlevi attire occurring later. Çelebi (1957) mentions that Mevlevi initially imitated Mevlana to a certain extent in their choice of clothing, while also maintaining Seljuk clothing styles. Mevlevi clothing consisted of the *sikke* (hat), *tenure*

(robe), and dervish cloak. Duru (1952) points out that the stages of the Mevlevi ritual were not clearly defined in terms of who established them and how, and it remains uncertain when the attire took its present form.

Sezgin (1985) notes that the Mevlevi were first recognized by their cloak and headwear, and that starting from the 15th century, their clothing was categorized into everyday wear, ceremonial wear, and *sema* attire. He emphasizes that this division into categories occurred during the 15th century. Önder, a former director of the Mevlana Museum, reports that the Mevlevi, who were known for their cloak and headwear (*serpuş*) at that time, began wearing distinct outfits for daily wear, ceremonies, and rituals from the 16th century onward (Önder, 1992, p. 123).

During Mevlana's era, there were no specific rules regarding *sema* attire, nor was the *sema* ceremony bound by strict guidelines. Research indicates that Mevlana and his followers performed the *sema* in their everyday clothes, following their inner spiritual inclination. Sources suggest that the *sema* ceremony, which began to take shape during Sultan Veled's time, became more structured and regulated by the 15th century, specifically during the time of Pir Adil Çelebi. The formalization of the *sema* ritual contributed to the categorization of Mevlevi attire, leading to a distinction between everyday clothes and *sema* garments.

Mevlevi Attire

Mevlevilik evolved into a more organized structure after Mevlana's passing, thanks to the dedicated efforts of Sultan Veled, Çelebi Hüsameddin, and Ulu Arif Çelebi. Over time, Mevlevi attire developed uniquely, distinguishing itself from other spiritual groups while still being influenced by them (Önder, 1957, pp. 7-8).

The *sikke*, which symbolizes the tombstone, is a distinctive headpiece in Mevlevilik and a central part of Mevlevi attire. In addition to the *sikke*, Mevlevi also wear a head covering called *arakiyye*, which functions as a sweat-absorbing cap (Çelebi, 1957, p. 162). According to Önder (1992, p. 123), the *arakiyye* is worn by those who have not yet earned the right to wear the *sikke* in the lodge.

The white garment worn during *sema* is called the *tennure*. Çelebi (1957) notes that the *tennure* comes in white and pistachio green tones, depending on the season. It is a sleeveless, collarless garment, open at the front up to the chest, fitted at the waist, and wide at the skirt. A thin belt (*tığ bent*) is tied around the waist, followed by a three-meter-long belt, seven to eight fingers wide (*Elifi nemed*). Over the *tennure*, a long-sleeved shirt called *deste-gül*, matching the color of the *tennure*, is worn. Additionally, a black service *tennure* is worn for daily tasks (Çelebi, 1957, p. 163).

In the past, loose trousers (*şalvar*) were worn under the *tennure*, but nowadays, a fitted undergarment called *içlik* is preferred. The width and flowing nature of the *tennure*'s skirt during *sema* make *içlik* necessary to ensure modesty. Duru (1952) mentions that Mevlevi elders wore loose pants called *Elifi şalvar*. Instead of a vest, they wore *deste-gül*, followed by a "V"-necked robe (*cübbe*) and an *Elifi nemed* belt around their waists. When leaving the kitchen, *matbah canları* wore a cloak over the *tennure* and footwear such as heeled or non-heeled slippers, *lapçin*, or shoes (Duru, 1952, p. 150).

Mevlevi wear *deste-gül* over the *sema* and service *tennure*, topped by a broad cloak. The winter cloaks can be thick and padded with cotton. Sometimes, a robe (*cübbe*) is worn instead of a cloak in daily attire.

Top (2001, p. 151) mentions that Mevlevi were always neatly dressed, exuding a sense of respectability. Their refined appearance was immediately noticeable. None of their inner or outer garments had buttons or clasps; instead, fastenings made from the same fabric were used to secure the clothing.

Mevlevi attire symbolizes the shroud, so no element suggesting worldly attachment was used in their clothing. This is why there were no buttons, as the garments were fastened using fabric ties sewn to the clothing. Mevlevi, always mindful of death, symbolized the *tennure* as the shroud, the cloak as the soil on the grave, and the *sikke* as the tombstone.

Classification of Mevlevi Attire

It can be categorized into two types: *sema* (ritual) attire and everyday wear: **Sema (ritual) attire:** *Tennure*, *deste-gül*, cloak, belt, *sikke*, slippers. **Everyday wear:** Service *tennure*, trousers, cloak, belt, *arakiyye*

General Information About Sema

The term *sema* derives from "sem," meaning to listen, to hear, or to give ear, and it also connotes understanding and obedience (Uludağ, 2006, p. 12). *Sema* is a part of Mevlana's thought and Turkish tradition, history, beliefs, and culture.

Some beliefs and many creatures in nature use it as an expression of gratitude or joy. From a scientific perspective, it has been established that rotation is the fundamental condition of existence. Nothing in existence is motionless; the commonality among beings is that their constitutive atoms' electrons, protons, and neutrons rotate. Therefore, the rotation in human atoms, the circulation of blood in the body, and the rotation of the earth sustain life and existence (Çelebi, 2002, pp. 187-188).

Sema is a state of spiritual ecstasy, performed with the right hand raised towards the heavens as if in prayer, and the left hand turned towards the earth. This symbolizes transmitting the spirituality received from God to the people. The rotation of the *semazen* from right to left, around the heart, signifies embracing all creation with love and affection (Top, 2001, p. 135).



Photograph 1. Dervishes performing Sema (Çelebi, 2002, p. 188)

Theoretical Framework of the Research

Fashion arts is a scientific field that explores historical and contemporary garments, comparing them to trace the impact of the past on the present. It examines clothing elements such as color, fabric, design, cutting, and sewing, investigating how clothing preferences vary among individuals, the environmental impacts of clothing use, and the cultural influences on garment choices. The examined clothing styles reflect the Seljuk period, offering insights into the clothing preferences and techniques of that era. Among the studied garments, those belonging to Mevlevi date back to the 19th century, and alpaca fabric—a mix of polyester and viscose—was commonly used. Garments attributed to Sultan Veled were made of silk and cotton. Museum inventory information confirms that the garments associated with Sultan Veled date back to the 13th century. Due to changing environmental conditions, synthetic fibers like polyester are more prevalent today, unlike in the past, when natural fibers were used. This contrast clearly demonstrates the influence of theoretical environments and conditions on garments.

The concept of cultural heritage has a broad presence in the literature related to its preservation and sustainability. Cultural heritage encompasses tangible and intangible values that help a society connect with its past, and preserving these values is recognized as a significant responsibility at both international and national levels. Tangible cultural heritage typically focuses on physical elements like monuments, archaeological sites, and historic structures, while intangible cultural heritage includes traditions, rituals, and oral narratives (UNESCO, 2003). The preservation of cultural heritage becomes sustainable through active community participation, particularly in maintaining intangible cultural heritage. Smith (2006) emphasizes the importance of local communities' knowledge and skills in preserving cultural heritage. Ashworth and Graham (2005) note that cultural heritage not only preserves the past but also strengthens communities' identities and senses of belonging.

Archiving and documentation also play a crucial role in cultural heritage preservation. UNESCO's Cultural Heritage Preservation Program highlights the systematic recording and safeguarding of cultural values. Harrison (2013) asserts that archiving and documentation are critical for the sustainability of cultural heritage, preventing the loss of cultural elements. Historical artifacts have been preserved and passed down to the present day, while the ethnographic study of intangible traditions, customs, and rituals reveals the concept of cultural heritage (Turizmebakış, 2024). Mevlevi garments were an integral part of daily life and ceremonial rituals of that era. While they were merely functional items

during their time, today they are seen as unique witnesses to the Mevlevi way of life, reaching us as cultural heritage. The preservation and transmission of cultural assets to future generations is not only a responsibility toward humanity but also safeguarded by laws and international agreements. While museums ensure the physical preservation and public presentation of these assets, the extraction, interpretation, and synthesis of their embedded data is the duty of relevant experts. This study aims to examine the Mevlevi and Sultan Veled-attributed garments from the perspective of fashion arts, thereby fulfilling the responsibility of revealing and interpreting the preserved data within these assets.

Significance of the Research

The garments examined in this study are significant for their ability to convey the clothing types, fabrics, sewing, and ornamentation characteristics of Seljuk-period fashion to the present. It is known that garments primarily made of fabric lack durability and will inevitably degrade over time. Therefore, it is essential to study, examine, and document these cultural heritage garments and accessories. The study of Mevlevi garments and those attributed to Sultan Veled from a technical perspective is expected to contribute to art and science, providing a resource for future generations.

Aim of the Research

This research aims to explore the impact and reflections of fashion art within Mevlevilik, shaped by Mevlana's philosophy. It specifically seeks to examine the artistic features of garments attributed to Sultan Veled from a fashion design perspective.

Method

In this study, a qualitative research approach using the document analysis method was employed. Archival documents and a literature review were conducted as part of the document analysis. Additionally, in accordance with the case study research approach, interviews with resource persons were conducted to describe the field of Mevlevi fashion art.

Documents

The study comprises Mevlevi garments, their accessories, and garments attributed to Sultan Veled, located in the Mevlana Museum. The Mevlevi garments include five pieces: *tennure*, *deste-gül*, cloak, *şalvar*, and service *tennure*. Four accessories—*sikke*, *clif-i nemed* (belt), and slippers (*mest*)—were also examined. The garments attributed to Sultan Veled include two pieces: a robe (*cübbe*) and *deste-gül*. Additionally, interviews with a Mevlevi dede (spiritual leader) were conducted to better understand contemporary Mevlevi clothing and its elements. The *tennure*, *deste-gül*, and cloak provided by the resource person were analyzed for their clothing techniques, contributing to the research.

Ethics

For data collection purposes, necessary permissions were obtained through the Directorate of the Institute of Social Sciences at Selçuk University and the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Following approval from the Konya Mevlana Museum Directorate, the research was initiated on November 7, 2006, under the supervision of an official and was completed on April 2, 2007.

Findings

Mevlevi Garments and Their Features

Sema Tennure

While cotton fabric was traditionally preferred for the *tennure*, synthetic blends and lighter fabrics are now more commonly used. Semazens (whirling dervishes) prefer synthetic fabrics as they are lighter and easier to wear, making the *sema* easier to perform (Yöndemli, 1997, p. 48). Today's *sema tennure* comes in several colors. Although white is most preferred, green, red, pink, and blue are also used (Duru, 2007, p. 126). Historical sources indicate that women in the past also performed *sema* in colorful *tennures*.

The *tennure* is sleeveless, collarless, and buttonless. It opens in a "V" shape down to the chest, is fitted above the waist, and flares out towards the hem. It consists of six panels, with a four-finger-wide thick woolen band sewn internally around the hem (Özönder, 2006, p. 44). The length of the *tennure* is extended to prevent the legs from being exposed while whirling (Duru, 2007, p. 126). In the past, lead weights were sewn into the hem to prevent excessive flaring, while

today, an 8-10 cm wide felt strip is inserted inside the hem. The felt not only prevents excessive flaring but also ensures an even spread of the skirt during *sema*.

The skirt of the *tennure* should not have an undulating appearance, with one side lifting and the other dropping, as this is considered inappropriate; such movements could expose the wearer's inner garments up to the waist. For this reason, semazens wearing the *tennure* must ensure the skirt's length below the waist is even after tying the *elif-i nemed* (belt) (Gölpınarlı, 2006, p. 54). Additionally, semazens must maintain a controlled speed while whirling so that the skirt does not rise too high, allowing the dervish's bare legs to be visible only up to the knees. It is considered improper for the skirts to fly up excessively (Koçu, 1969, pp. 225-226).



Photograph 2. Dal Tennure belonging to Nadir Karnıbüyük (Aktaş, 2007)

The proportional opening of the *Sema Tennure's* skirt during the *sema* is closely related to the garment's pattern, cut, and sewing. Variations in length, even by a few centimeters, in the garment's pattern, cut, and sewing can cause the semazen to lose balance (Yöndemli, 1997, pp. 47-48).

To wear the *tennure*, one must successfully complete the process known as "çile" (ordeal) and pass the examinations conducted by Mevlevi elders. Those who pass these examinations earn the right to wear the *tennure* ceremonially.



Photograph 3. Sema Tennure and Deste-gül from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

The *sema tennure*, made by the Konya Mevlana Museum Directorate for exhibition purposes and examined as part of the research, has the following body cut characteristics: the garment has no front-back or shoulder seams. The garment

pattern was placed on the fabric fold before cutting. The side panels of the garment, both front and back, are flared at the hem. Triangular inserts were added toward the edges of the skirt, while the sides of the garment are stitched. The body cut of the *tennure* is of normal width, but the skirt widens significantly toward the hem. The skirt length reaches below the ankle, and a "V" neckline extends to the body line. The *tennure* is sleeveless, referred to as a "zero-sleeve" cut. Since the garment's center front is on the fabric fold, no closure was applied.

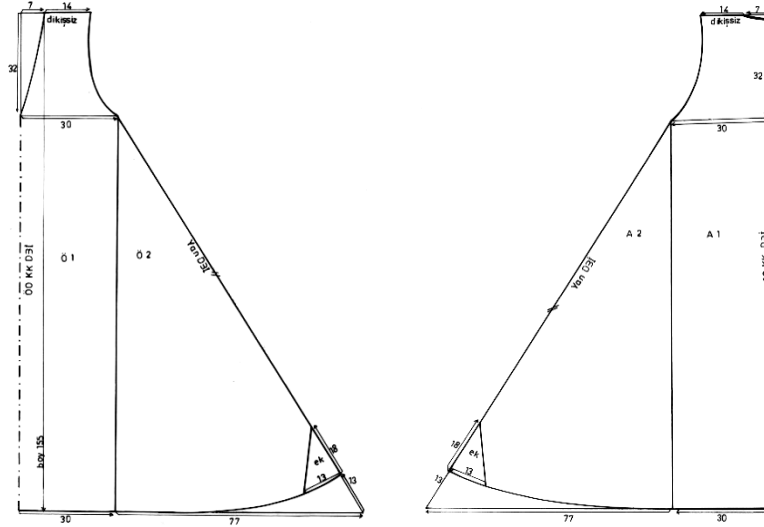


Figure 1. Sema Tennure pattern design (Aktaş, 2007)

The *tennure* is sewn using a straight stitch technique on a machine, with clean stitching applied to the side seams. The neckline is finished with a facing and a machine-stitched closed hem. The hem is finished with a machine-stitched closed hem, and a 10 cm wide felt strip is placed inside the hem and secured 2 cm from the edge using a straight stitch technique. The garment is made of white alpaca fabric, using white thread for stitching. No lining is used, and no embellishments are found on the *tennure*.

Deste-gül

"Deste-gül" means a fresh, beautiful bouquet of spring roses (El-İstanbuli, 2002, p. 129). The *deste-gül* is a crossover jacket that closes on the right side, with a 1 cm wide tie sewn at the hem and tucked into the *elif-i nemed* (belt). The left side remains free, with a "V" neckline, long sleeves, and a length that ends at the waist. The color and fabric of the *deste-gül*, worn over the *dal tennure*, match that of the *dal tennure*, and the outfit is completed with a belt tied at the waist.



Photograph 4. Front and back view of Sema Tennure and Deste-gül from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

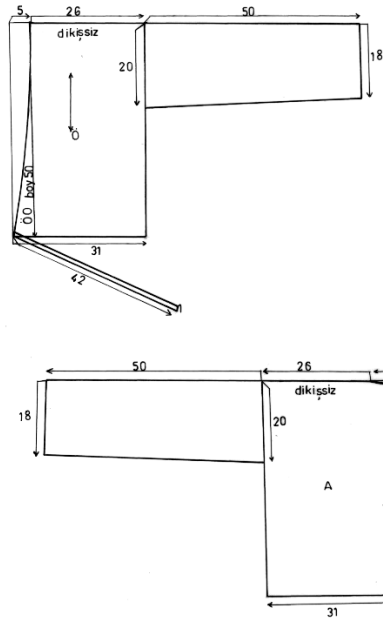


Figure 2. Deste-gül Pattern Design (Aktaş, 2007)

The analysis of the *deste-gül* in terms of garment techniques revealed the following model and pattern characteristics: the body cut extends straight down from under the armholes at the front and back. There is no seam in the center back. The center back is cut on the fabric fold. There is no seam on the shoulders, with the fabric folded and cut. The hem width matches the body width, and the length reaches the waist, indicating a normal body width. The closure of the garment is in a crossover (asymmetric) style. The closure is achieved by tying a strap at the right hem to the belt, overlapping the left side over the right. The garment has straight sleeves that extend from the body without an armhole curve, tapering 2 cm toward the sleeve opening. The garment is sewn using a straight stitch technique, with clean stitching applied to the side seams, and the front edge is finished with a facing and a machine-stitched hem. The hem of the *deste-gül* is folded inward by 4 cm and finished with a machine-stitched hem. The garment is made of white alpaca fabric, using white thread for stitching. There is no lining, and embellishments were not used.

Hırka

The *hırka*, also called the "formal" *hırka* for rituals, is an outer garment that is open at the front and collarless, with sleeves measuring 70 cm in width and over one meter in length (Semazen, 2024). Based on the pattern design, the Mevlevi *hırka* features a "V" neckline, extends straight down from the shoulders, has a wide body, is sewn in a flared cut, and has long, wide sleeves. The length extends below the ankles. It is worn over the *sema tennure* and is typically black. In general appearance, the garment is quite wide and made from black wool, linen, or even *sof* fabric, depending on the season (Gölpınarlı, 1953, p. 431).



Photograph 5. Hırka belonging to Nadir Karnıbüyük (Aktaş, 2007)

The inscription dated 1241 (639 AH) at the Konya Ali Hoca Mosque states: “Dedicated to the Fakih and Sufis who wear the *birka*,” indicating that there was a class of *birka*-wearers during the Seljuk period (Çağdaş, 1992, p. 33). Çıpan (2002) mentions that in Mevlevilik, the *birka* is worn in a ceremony called “Hırka Giydirme” (Hırka Robing Ceremony), where the dervish, after completing the cell ordeal, is clothed in the *birka* by the sheikh with prayers and a ceremony (Çıpan, 2002, p. 170). Özönder (2006) notes that dervishes drape this special garment over their shoulders without inserting their arms into the sleeves, covering the front with their hands like a robe, which is a customary practice. He emphasizes that the sleeves should be worn during prayers, festivals, and ceremonies. Additionally, the tradition of not wearing the sleeves is practiced by the dervishes, whereas Mevlevi sheikhs always wear the sleeves of their *birkas* and ensure that the *sikke* is worn first when donning the *birka* (Özönder, 2006, pp. 33-34). The *birka* is removed before starting the *sema*. İnançer (2006) highlights that removing the *birka* before performing the *sema* symbolizes detachment from all worldly matters (İnançer, 2006, p. 39). The simple philosophy of life described by the Prophet Muhammad as “a morsel and a *birka*” is embodied in these garments (Tezcan, 2013, p. 100). Outside of formal duties, dervishes also wear *birkas* with wide sleeves, collarless and straight-cut, when going out (Özönder, 2006, p. 34).



Photograph 6. Front and Back View of the Hırka from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

The *Dışarı Hırkası* (Outdoor Hırka) is primarily worn in colder weather. It has long sleeves, is generally collarless, varies in length between below the knee and ankle, and has a straight cut. Cotton or wool is inserted between the lining and fabric to provide warmth during winter. The front closure of the garment is secured with ties.

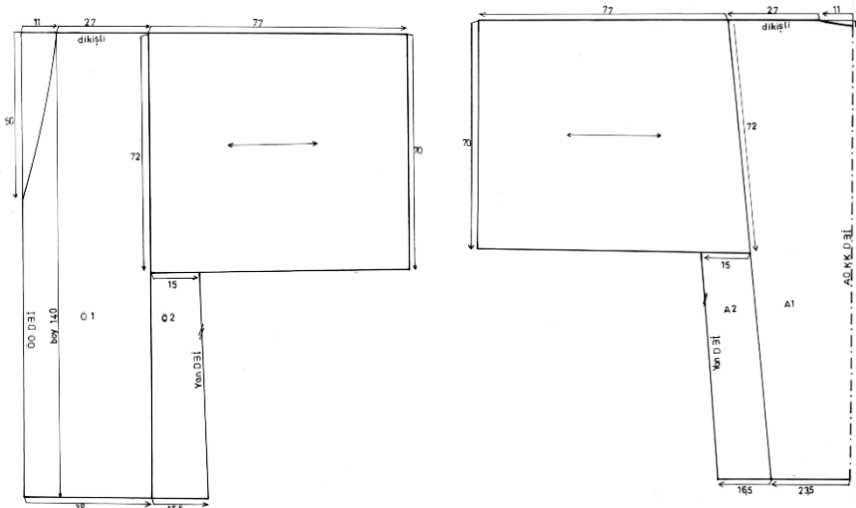


Figure 3. Hırka; pattern design (Aktaş, 2007)

The cut of the *birka* examined within the scope of the research is as follows: the front body features a dart running straight down from the shoulder. In the back, a dart extends from the shoulder toward the center back. The side panels, which start from under the arms and merge with the darts, are designed as fabric folds (seamless). The shoulder seams

are stitched. The garment is long and has a wide body. It has a "V" neckline. The sleeves are very wide at the top and taper toward the cuffs. The front of the *birka* is open, with no closure. It is sewn using a straight stitch technique on a machine, with clean stitching applied to the shoulder, dart, and underarm seams. The hem and sleeve edges are finished with a machine-stitched closed hem. The garment is made of black alpaca fabric and sewn with black thread. The *birka* is unlined and has no embellishments.

Şalvar

The *şalvar* is known among Turks as "üm." It is described as a garment with a loose, gathered waist, wide legs, and separately sewn cuffs (Süslü, 1989, p. 163). The *Elif-i Şalvar* has a wider waist than trousers but narrower than regular *şalvar*, with a higher crotch (Cremers, 1976, p. 7654). Although the *şalvars* worn by Mevlevis do not differ significantly from the clothing of the time, half-crotch, tapered-leg, black fabric versions are more commonly preferred (Önder, 1992, p. 128). The *şalvar*, tied at the waist with a drawstring, is designed to fit comfortably around the waist (Özönder, 2006, p. 49).



Photograph 7. Şalvar from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

The *şalvar* is a garment that maintains a uniform width below the waist, with a crotch that falls below the knee line, tapered cuffs, and a drawstring (known as *uçkur*) that cinches the waist for a custom fit. The length is below the ankle, and it is generally black. Duru (1952) notes that Mevlevi elders and sheikhs wore *şalvars*, but *matbah canları* (kitchen novices) did not (Duru, 1952, p. 150). Originating from Turkish clothing culture, the *şalvar* is favored by the Mevlevis for its comfort and adherence to propriety and remains popular today.

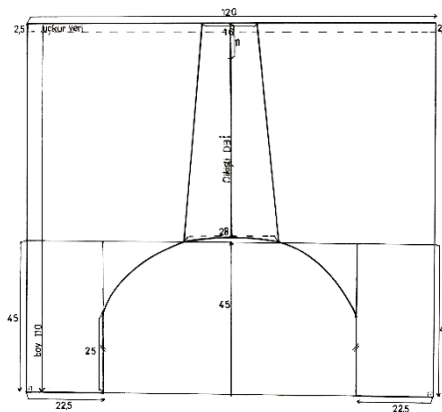


Figure 4. Şalvar pattern design (Aktaş, 2007)

The model and pattern characteristics of the *şalvar* from the Mevlana Museum, examined within the scope of the research, are as follows: the waist is quite wide, as the drawstring (*uçkur*) allows the fit to be adjusted on both sides according to the wearer. The front center seam is stitched. An inclined panel, widening toward the crotch, is used. The crotch is below the knee line, and the cuffs are tapered. The length of the garment reaches the ankle. It is sewn using a straight stitch technique on a machine. The *uçkur* opening at the waist is folded inward by 2.5 cm and secured with a

straight stitch. The cuffs are finished with a machine-stitched closed hem. The garment is made of black alpaca fabric, using black thread. It is unlined and has no embellishments.

Sikke

The *sikke* is the name of the felt hat worn by Mevlevi dervishes, resembling the color of camel hair (Koçu, 1969, p. 205). It is light brown, made from felted wool, and shaped using special molds. The *sikke* is 40-50 cm long, tapering upward from the head's circumference, and serves as the headpiece completing the *tennure* during *sema* ceremonies.



Photograph 8. Sikke from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

Özönder (2006) states that the *sikke* without the wrapping known as *destar* is called a "dal sikke." This type of *sikke* is worn by those who have an interest, affection, or closeness to Mevlevilik, as well as by dervishes who have not yet become *dede* (elders) (Özönder, 2006, p. 18). Today, the "dal sikke" is commonly referred to simply as *sikke*. Gölpınarlı (2006) describes the *sikke* as representing "the stamp or sign" of being on the path of Mevlana, symbolizing affiliation with Mevlana, and thus it is known as the "Mevlevi cap" (Gölpınarlı, 2006, p. 52). Önder (1957) notes that the *sikkeler* at the heads of Mevlana's tombs and Mevlevi graves in the Konya Mevlana Museum are pointed and cone-like, whereas more recently made and worn *sikkeler* are cylindrical. He emphasizes that earlier *sikkeler* were made from a single layer of felt, while now they are made from two interlocking layers of felt (Önder, 1957, p. 8).

Elif-i Nemed (Belt)

Özönder (2006) describes the *Elif-i Nemed* as a type of belt wrapped around the waist of the *tennure*, which extends over the *şalvar* (2006, p. 39). Çıpan (2002) states that it resembles the Arabic letter "Elif" due to its length and pointed end (Çıpan, 2002, p. 170). Çelebi (1957) explains that a thin strap called *tığ bend* is first tied around the waist of the *tennure*, followed by the three-meter-long *Elif-i Nemed*, detailing how the belt is fastened around the waist (Çelebi, 1957, p. 163). The *tığ bend* equalizes the drop of the *tennure's* skirt at the waist, ensuring an even spread during *sema*. Afterward, the *Elif-i Nemed* is tied to secure the waist. The term "Nemed" means "felt," while "Elfe" signifies "affection, intimacy, and unity." Hence, *Elif-i Nemed* came to mean "friendship with felt" (Özönder, 2006, p. 41).

The *Elif-i Nemed* tied at the waist of the *tennure* is 8-10 cm wide and approximately 2 meters long. It was previously made by inserting felt into the fabric, but today, fiber is used instead of felt. It is covered with black fabric before stitching. In the past, the fabric known as *şal* was used to make the belt, and Mevlevi used this fabric as the *Elif-i Nemed* tied around the waist of the *tennure* (Karnıbüyük, interview dated 14/02/2007).



Photograph 9. Elif-i Nemed Belonging to Nadir Karnıbüyük (Aktaş, 2007)

The *Elif-î Nemed* examined in the study is 10 cm wide and 150 cm long. When tied around the waist, the left end is cut into a triangular shape. A 1 cm wide, 150 cm long tie is sewn onto this triangular part. The *Elif-î Nemed* is filled with fiber and covered with black alpaca fabric. It is sewn using black thread and a straight stitch technique on a machine.

Mest (Footwear)

Önder (1957) notes that Mevlevis' footwear did not differ from the shoes of the period, including boots, slippers (*lapçin*), *mest*, and lace-up shoes (*iskarpin*) (1957, p. 14). Hamdi Bey (1873) states, "Mevlevis would remove their red shoes and perform *sema* barefoot on a thin covering over the earth" (p. 27). Özönder (2006) indicates that Mevlevis initially preferred yellow shoes but later used other colors as well (2006, p. 51). Celalettin Çelebi also emphasizes that "*sema* was originally performed barefoot." Erol (1996) states that *sema* was later performed in white woolen socks, and from the 1960s onwards, *mest* socks began to be used (p. 129).



Photograph 10. Sock Mest

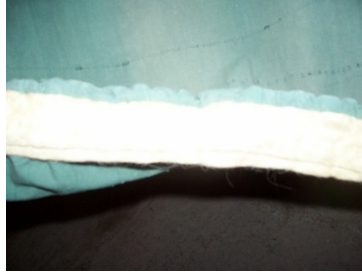
Hizmet Tennure

Önder (1992, p. 126) defines the *bizmet tennure* as the garment worn by the canlars responsible for dervish lodge duties, those undergoing the *çile* (ordeal), and market dervishes. The *bizmet tennure* is made of thick fabrics (Sezgin, 1985, p. 429), and there are even leather-stitched versions (Gölpınarlı, 1953, p. 429). The *bizmet tennure* predominantly uses black and dark green colors (Duru, 2007, p. 126), as dark colors are preferred due to its use during service. The *bizmet tennure* is worn by the canlars responsible for both internal and external services at the Mevlevi lodge. It has a "V" neckline, is sleeveless, has a normal waist width, flares toward the hem, and its length is between the calves and ankles. It is made of dark fabric and is worn daily by *matbah canları* (kitchen novices) while performing their duties.



Photograph 11. Front and Back View of Hizmet Tennure from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

Felt is used at the hem of the *bizmet tennure*, just like in the *sema tennure*, for the canlars learning *sema*. The felt adds weight to the *tennure*, preventing it from opening too quickly during the *sema*, which is why it is preferred.



Photograph 12. Inner Hem detail of Hizmet Tennure from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

The *nevniyazlar* (novices) who were learning *sema* would practice in the *bizmet tennure*. However, they could only wear the *sema tennure* on the day they participated in the *sema*, with the permission of the head *semazen* (Önder, 1992, p. 126).

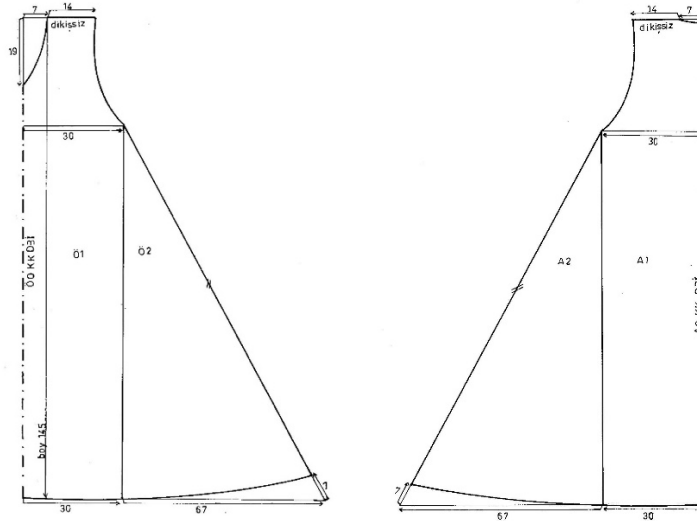


Figure 5. Hizmet Tennure; pattern design (Aktaş, 2007)

The body model and pattern characteristics of the *bizmet tennure*, made by the Mevlana Museum Directorate for exhibition purposes and examined as part of the research, are as follows: Darts run from the body line and underarm to the hem in the center front and back. The center front and back of the garment are seamless. The garment pattern was placed on the fabric fold before cutting. There is no shoulder seam. The side panels, starting under the armholes, widen significantly toward the hem. The body of the *bizmet tennure* is of normal width, and its length is between the calf and ankle. The garment has a "V" neckline and is sleeveless. It is sewn using a straight stitch technique on a machine, with clean stitching applied to the side seams. The neckline is finished with a facing and a closed hem technique. An 8 cm wide layer of off-white felt is placed inside the hem and pressed with a closed hem technique on a machine. The garment, made of green cotton fabric, is unlined and has no embellishments.

Arakkiye

Gölpınarlı (1953, p. 427) states that the *arakkiye* means "sweat-absorbing," is made from felted wool, is white in color, and is a shorter head covering compared to the *sikke*. He also notes that children, women, and *matbah canları* (kitchen novices) who have not yet started *sema* wear the *arakkiye*. Additionally, *canlars* serving in daily tasks and sleeping at night also wear the *arakkiye* as a head covering.



Photograph 13. Arakkiye Attributed to Mevlana (from the Mevlana Museum) (Aktaş, 2007)

Garments Attributed to Sultan Veled

Cübbe

The *cübbe* is an outer garment worn by religious and scholarly figures. It is collarless or has a stand-up collar, has a wide body, no front closure, long sleeves, and is long in length. The *cübbe* can be made from any type of fabric and color, but the model must have a simple design, and it can also be made from silk fabric.



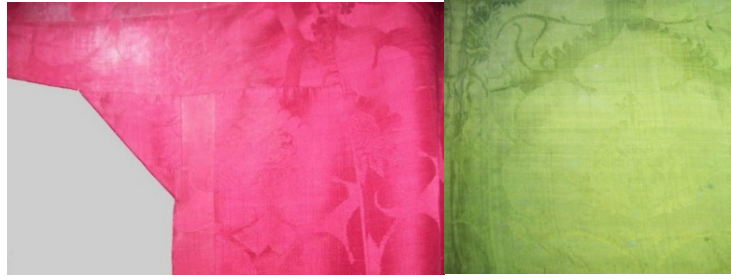
Photograph 14. Cübbe Attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 705 from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

According to the inventory information examined within the scope of the research, the *cübbe* attributed to Sultan Veled is dated to the 13th century. The findings from examining the *cübbe* in terms of clothing techniques are as follows: Darts run from the shoulders to the hem in both the front and back. An additional dart is added at the center of the front and back panels. The side panel, starting under the arm, merges with the front dart and is designed to extend 4 cm toward the back panel. A side piece is planned between the front side piece and the dart on the back. The front and back panels are cut together, with no shoulder seam. The *cübbe* is quite wide in the body, flaring toward the hem, and its length is between the calf and ankle. It has a *chemise* collar that is rectangular, with a straight back collar cut on the fabric fold. The collar is designed to create a naval collar look at the back when the front of the garment is open. The underside of the collar is made from pistachio-green fabric, and a stiffened fabric, treated with the techniques available at the time, is inserted to ensure the collar maintains its shape.



Photograph 15. Front and Back Collar Detail of Cübbe Attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 705 from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

The wide kimono-style sleeve, emerging from the dart, is designed normally, with square gussets placed under the arms that fold into a triangular shape. A 3 cm wide extension, parallel to the body, is applied under the front left armhole and is also used on the back right sleeve. There is a triangular extension toward the cuff in the back underarms. The sleeve tapers slightly toward the cuff, and the sleeve length is designed to be very long.



Photograph 16. Underarm and Lining Detail of Cübbe Attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 705 from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

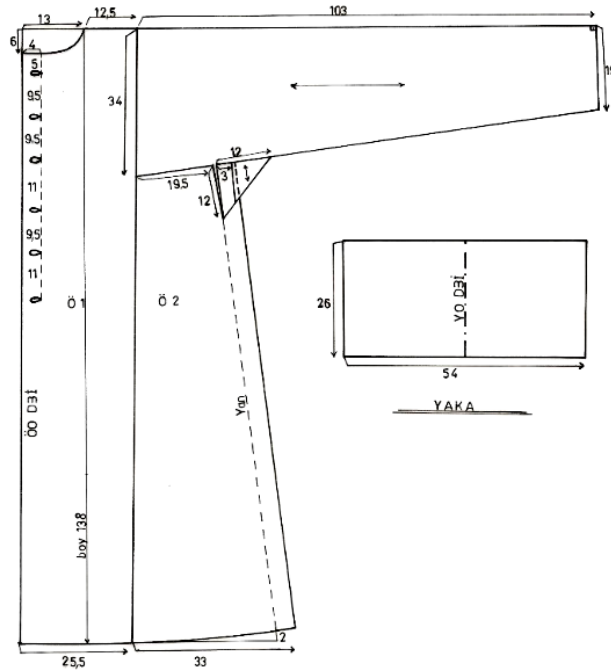


Figure 6. Front body pattern design of Cübbe attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 705 (Aktaş, 2007)

Closure is applied with a placket (bound buttonhole), providing a 4 cm closure allowance on the front left side. The closure is achieved by folding the right front over the left front.

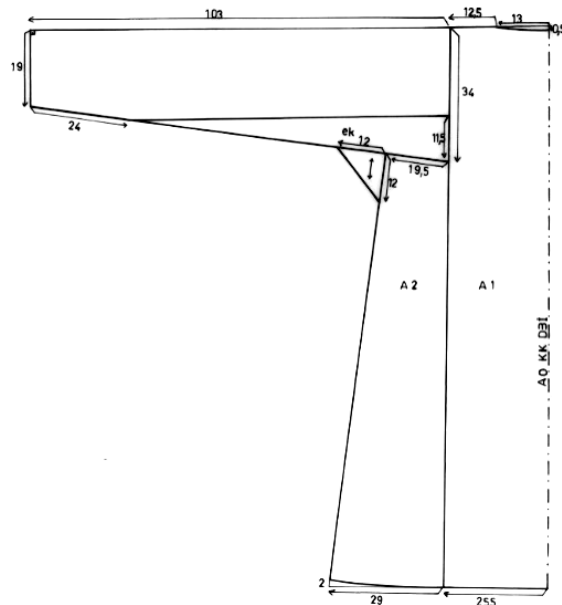


Figure 7. Back body pattern design of cübbe attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 705 (Aktaş, 2007)

The *cübbe* attributed to Sultan Veled with inventory number 705 was sewn using hand-stitching and basting techniques. The stitches are noted for their neatness. Darts, other body parts, sleeves, hem, and collar were sewn with hand-stitching. The center front, hem, cuffs, and collar edge are surrounded by 1 cm internal hand-stitching. Six placket buttonholes, each 2.5 cm wide, were irregularly placed on the left front, secured with basting before lining was added. Cream-colored thick threads were inserted into the plackets for support. The lining of the garment was also sewn with hand-stitching, and the attachment to the body was done using the same technique. The *cübbe*, with a long-standing usage history, is a significant cultural garment. According to the inventory information examined, the *cübbe* attributed to Sultan Veled is dated to the 13th century. The main fabric used is patterned silk, while the lining is made from the same fabric in pistachio green. Silk thread was used for sewing. The garment, notable for its luxurious fabric, features no embellishments. The closure was achieved using a fabric-made loop, and no buttons were found on the examined garment.

Deste-gül

Within the scope of the research, the *deste-gül* attributed to Sultan Veled with inventory number 706 is entirely different from the Mevlevis' usual garment. It is decorated with various prayers and geometric patterns. Tezcan describes such garments as follows: "These shirts were used for healing purposes. In addition, sultans wore them under their armor for victory in battle and protection from the evil eye" (Milliyet, 2024).



Photograph 17. Front and Back View of Deste-gül Attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 706 from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

The examination of the inventory information within the scope of the research reveals the following findings regarding the clothing techniques of the *deste-gül* attributed to Sultan Veled: The back center and shoulder are seamless. There are side seams. A 5 cm slit extends upward from the side hem. The hem is as wide as the body, with the length ending slightly below the waist. The garment is collarless, with no closure in the front. It features a low-set, wide kimono-style sleeve with triangular gussets inserted under the arms. The sleeve tapers 2 cm from the body to the cuff, with the sleeve length reaching the elbow line.

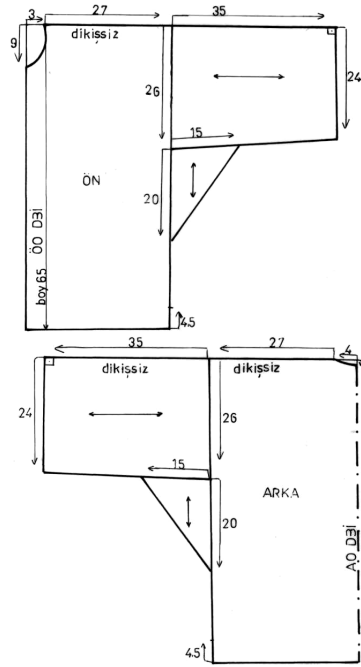


Figure 8. Pattern Drawing of Deste-gül Attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 706 from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007)

The *deste-gül* attributed to Sultan Veled with inventory number 706, examined within the scope of the research, was sewn entirely by hand using whip stitch, bound stitch, and hand-press stitch techniques. The garment was sewn with whip stitch by hand. The collar edge and lining pieces were attached using bound stitch by hand. The lining of the *deste-gül* was secured to the garment using the hand-press stitch technique. Cream-colored cotton woven fabric was used for both the garment and its lining. The *deste-gül* and its lining were stitched with cream-colored cotton thread. The edges of the collar, front center, hem, side slit edges, and cuffs were decorated by weaving a pink silk cord, which was attached to the garment using whip stitch with the same silk thread.



Photograph 18. Hemline and Side Slit Decoration Details of the Deste-gül Attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 706 from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007).

Various verses and shapes were inscribed on the entire surface of the garment, which was treated with a finish, using ink and paints in red, black, and gold colors via the penmanship technique. The motifs used on the garment's surface include geometric designs (square, rhombus, semicircle, circle), object-based designs (*nalın-i serif*), and inscriptions. The design features a non-figurative and realistic style. The larger texts on the garment are written in *sülüs* script, while the inscriptions within the squares and on the *nalın* are done using the *nesih* script.



Photograph 19. Right and left shoulder decoration details of the Deste-gül attributed to Sultan Veled with Inventory Number 706 from the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007).

The verses on the chest area of the garment are as follows: The basmala is written at the positions marked as 1 and 5 on the right and left sides of the schematic drawing. On the right side, at the section marked as 6, the first verse of Surah al-Fath and part of the second verse are written, while in sections 7 and 8, the continuation of the second verse and the third verse of Surah al-Fath are inscribed. On the left chest area, at positions 2, 3, and 4 in the schematic drawing, the final verse of Surah al-Tawbah is written. At positions 9 and 10 in the schematic drawing, the depiction of Nalın-ı Şerif (the footprints of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) is illustrated. The entire surface of the garment is adorned with the *Asma ul-Husna* (the Names of Allah). The *Kalimat al-Tawhid* is also inscribed. On the right shoulder of the Deste-gül, the names of the four archangels—Jibril, Mikail, Azrael, and Israfil—are embroidered. On the left shoulder, the names of the four caliphs—Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali—are written. At the center of the back, slightly above the hemline, a twelve-pointed star motif is drawn within a circle, with Arabic script filling the interior of the stars. Above this motif, Nalın-ı Şerif (the footprints of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him) is depicted. The rest of the garment is divided into squares, with various prayers and *Asma ul-Husna* inscribed in Arabic within each square.

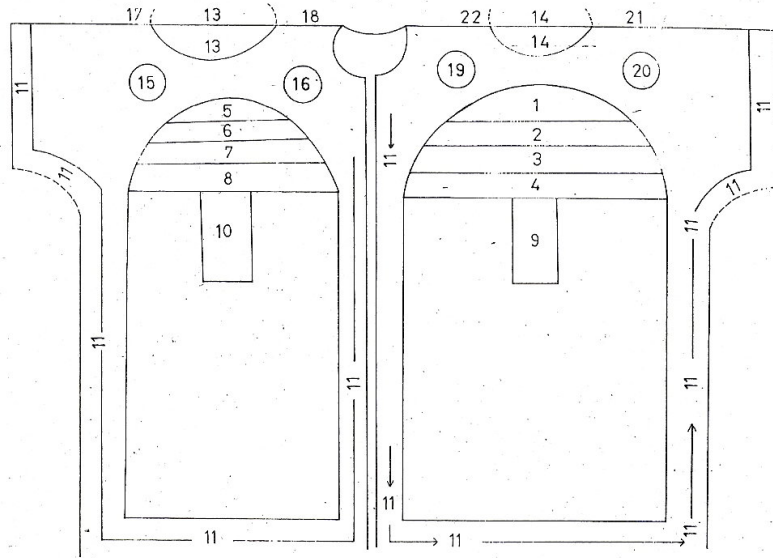


Figure 9. Schematic drawing indicating the placement of the inscriptions on the Deste-gül (Barışta, 1995, 63).



Photograph 20. Front and back sleeve embroidery details of the 706 inventory numbered Deste-gül attributed to Sultan Veled from Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007).

Conclusion

In this study, seven garments attributed to Mevlevi and Sultan Veled from the Mevlana Museum were examined. Among these garments, five were attributed to Mevlevi, and two to Sultan Veled. The findings regarding the materials used, colors, model and cutting techniques, stitching techniques, edge finishing techniques, decorative subjects, and techniques selected are summarized as follows: It was observed that alpaca and cotton fabrics were primarily used for Mevlevi's garments. The use of alpaca fabric in Mevlevi's clothing stems from its production starting in the second half of the 20th century. The examined Mevlevi garments were sewn in 1998. This can be explained by the increased use of synthetic fabrics today. Additionally, due to its economic nature, light weight, and wrinkle resistance, alpaca fabric is preferred for modern-day sema tennures. The fabric of the hizmet tennure was cotton, possibly due to it being an older garment and its comfort and sweat absorption during service.

The 705 inventory-numbered robe attributed to Sultan Veled was made of silk (patterned-textured), while the 706 inventory-numbered deste-gül used cotton fabric. Mevlevi garments were unlined, likely due to the unsuitability of lining for sema tennure. The hizmet tennure's lack of lining could be because of its frequent washing and quick drying requirements. The robe attributed to Sultan Veled had a green silk lining, indicating its use for special occasions. The 706 inventory-numbered deste-gül attributed to Sultan Veled used a cotton lining, distinguishing it from the sema tennure's deste-gül, likely for its inner wear and sweat absorption properties.

The Mevlevi's garments were sewn with a plain machine stitch using thread matching the fabric color. These garments were sewn using machines, given that they were made for exhibition in 1998 by the museum management. Hand-stitching was not employed as it was the era of machine production. The 705 inventory-numbered robe attributed to Sultan Veled used silk thread for compatibility with the fabric. Hand-sewn oyulgama (applique) and çırpma (overcast) stitching techniques were evident. The use of hand stitching in the garments attributed to Sultan Veled corresponds to a period before the invention of sewing machines. Multiple sewing techniques were used in constructing the garments due to the need for different techniques for body, collar, and sleeve sections. The 706 inventory-numbered garment attributed to Sultan Veled was stitched using cotton thread in cream color, employing oyulgama and çırpma stitching techniques. The use of matching thread was likely to ensure compatibility with the fabric type.

No buttons, buttonholes, or other fastenings were found in the front of Mevlevi's garments or the 706 inventory-numbered deste-gül attributed to Sultan Veled. Özönder (2006) notes that "buttonholes and buttons are regarded as symbols of attachment and signs of worldly love." The deste-gül's hem was tied with a cord to prevent its front from opening. The front closure of the 705 inventory-numbered robe attributed to Sultan Veled was secured with a loop made from the garment's fabric. However, no buttons were found, likely because this garment was intended for special occasions.

The tennures of Mevlevi had similar cutting characteristics. The hem of the hizmet tennure was slightly narrower, and its length was shorter than that of the sema tennure, possibly to facilitate movement during service. The robe (hırka) was cut wide with long sleeves and a long body, reflecting expressions such as "being cloaked in a robe" or "pulling the head into the robe," signifying detachment from the world (Gölpınarlı, n.d., 159). The 705 inventory-numbered robe attributed to Sultan Veled was also cut wide, with long sleeves and hem, as an outer garment necessitating a wide cut.

No decorations were found on Mevlevis' garments, likely due to their preference for simple and clean attire. While no decorations were present on the robe attributed to Sultan Veled, its fabric and lining were ornate, eliminating the need for additional embellishments. The deste-gül attributed to Sultan Veled featured multiple decorative elements, including geometric patterns (circle, semi-circle, square, rhombus, straight line), iconographic motifs (nalın-ı şerif), and inscriptions in nesih and sülüs script. Additionally, embellishment techniques included cord made by crocheting and pencil work.

The 705 inventory-numbered robe and the 706 inventory-numbered deste-gül, claimed to belong to Sultan Veled in the Mevlana Museum's records, cannot be definitively attributed to him. Atasoy notes that the 705 inventory-numbered garment attributed to Sultan Veled exhibits 16th-century style characteristics with large floral motifs (2005, 121). The examined robe's fabric, lining, model, sewing, and auxiliary materials indicate it is not a 13th-century garment. It belongs to the Ottoman period, marked by its ornate fabric, lining, and materials. The garment's well-preserved state also supports this conclusion. Research showed no distinction between the clothing of commoners and the elite in the Seljuk era. It is said that the 705 inventory-numbered robe was donated to the museum and preserved in its archives. Barış (1995) asserts that the 706 inventory-numbered deste-gül attributed to Sultan Veled (shirt) shares characteristics with 16th-17th century talismanic shirts, suggesting it is not from the Seljuk period. These talismanic shirts were military undergarments during the Ottoman Empire from the 15th to 18th centuries. The motifs resembling sandals or footprints on this garment also date back to the 16th-18th centuries (pp. 56-57).

Atasoy (2005) states that about 70-80 examples similar to the deste-gül (shirt) can be found in Topkapı Palace and the Istanbul Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, indicating it may date back to the Seljuk era but cannot be definitively attributed to Sultan Veled (p. 121). This study concludes that the 705 inventory-numbered robe and the 706 inventory-numbered deste-gül attributed to Sultan Veled do not belong to the Seljuk era. However, these garments, preserved in the Mevlana Museum and tentatively linked to Sultan Veled, carry the heritage of Turkish culture from previous centuries, demonstrating a refined artistic sensibility. They offer examples of clothing preferences from their era to the present, making them significant. Both historical and contemporary Turkish garments should be researched in detail, documented, and adapted into modern clothing designs to be introduced to future generations and the world.

Recommendations

Efforts should be made to ensure that the garments stored in museum archives are preserved under better conditions, suitable to their characteristics. Restoration work on these garments should be carried out to ensure their transmission to future generations. To preserve and sustain Turkish culture, institutions that provide clothing education should include courses on traditional garments. Additionally, the clothing of Mevlevis, garments attributed to Sultan Veled, and other garments stored in archives should be examined in terms of technological aspects and art history, with proper dating studies conducted. In terms of fashion art, these garments can serve as inspiration for adaptations into contemporary clothing designs, contributing to the promotion of Turkish culture abroad.

Limitations of the Study

The collection and examination of documents for this research were conducted between November 7, 2006, and April 2, 2007. The study is limited to Mevlevi garments and those attributed to Sultan Veled found in the Mevlana Museum.

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Research Article

Redesigning Mevlevi garments using AI

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Abstract

Traditional Mevlevi costumes are an important part of our cultural heritage. While preserving these values, exploring the potential of AI in the design process is an important step to both respect the past and inspire the future. With the rapid development of AI in image recognition and image processing algorithms in recent years, it has become possible to redesign traditional Mevlevi costumes. This innovative approach enables new designs that emerge by combining AI with the aesthetic and functional features of traditional clothing. This approach also offers significant potential to reveal future contemporary interpretations of traditional handicrafts. In addition, modernizing traditional motifs and designing them to attract the attention of new generations also contributes to the transfer of cultural heritage to future generations. In the AI-supported design approach, the new designs of Mevlevi clothes not only appeal to the eye in terms of aesthetics, but also take into account functional features such as freedom of movement and comfort of the wearer. This shows that AI-supported design represents a user-oriented approach. In addition, the meeting of technology and traditional handicrafts allows the emergence of new and creative design ideas. Designing Mevlevi costumes with AI may attract great interest not only in the fashion world but also in the arts and culture industries. This shows that design is not just focused on clothing, but can also provide inspiration and aesthetic experiences to a wide range of people. In this study, information about Mevlevi order and Mevlevi costumes is given. The characteristics of Mevlevi clothes are stated. The symbolic meanings of clothes are mentioned. Information about clothing features is given. Mevlevi clothing samples were examined. Research has been conducted on AI recognizing a clothing image and designing the image it recognizes in line with the information given. Mevlevi clothes were shown to AI. These pictures have been identified. Errors in the definitions have been corrected and deficiencies have been completed. He was asked to create a design in line with the information given. New designs were created by eliminating the deficiencies in the designs and making updates. The positive and negative aspects of the designs were examined.

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Introduction

Mevlânâ was a great Islamic scholar and mystic who was born in 1207 in the city of Belh, located within the borders of today's Afghanistan, and died in Konya in 1273 (Bölükbaşı, 2011; Orakçioğlu, 2022; Tok, 2015). Rumi, nicknamed "Mevlana", is a poet and thinker who wrote works in Persian. His father is Bahaeddin Veled, a famous scholar (Atlıhan, 2018; Kara, 2006; Mermer, 2014). He wrote works on important philosophical and religious issues of his period. After coming to Konya with his family, he consolidated his leadership as a Sufi here and inspired the establishment of a sect called Mevlevi, which is attributed to him and based on Sufi traditions (Güvenç, 2021). Mevlevi order; It has developed

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as a lifestyle that includes the cultural, literary and artistic aspects of Sufism. His best-known work is *Mesnevi*. He also has works such as *Divan-ı Kebîr*, *Fihi Ma Fihi* and *Letters*. These texts reflect Mevlana's teachings, thoughts and understanding of Sufism. His works, full of hymns, poems and instructive stories, have influenced many different languages and cultures, and have been read, interpreted and loved by people for centuries (Akmaz, 2021). Rumi's observations and spiritual teachings about the depths of being human have made him a respected figure not only in the Islamic world but all over the world (Karaismailoğlu, 2008; Öngören, 2004; Şahinoğlu, 1991).

Mevlevi order is an Islamic Sufi order founded in Anatolia in the 13th century by the great Islamic scholar and poet Mevlana Celâleddin Rumi. Mevlevi order emphasizes the importance of mystical love and tolerance towards people along with religious worship (Akay, 2015; Şimşir, 2021). Sema ritual is one of the remarkable rituals of the Mevlevi movement. This ritual performed by dervishes by turning symbolizes spiritual ascension and the expression of love for God. Mevlevi order is based on Mevlana's poems and writings such as *Mesnevi*, and these texts form the basis of Sufi teaching (Akgündüz, 2007). It evaluates scholarship, artistic expression, and personal spiritual development. By calling people to divine love and universal brotherhood, it offers an open path to people from all religious, ethnic and social backgrounds. Beyond being just a religious sect, it refers to a lifestyle that focuses on the spiritual and spiritual development of humans (Duru, 2012). This sect aims to reach spiritual depth through disciplined rituals such as dhikr, prayer and sema. He also stands out with his music. Sema ceremonies, accompanied by musical instruments such as ney and kudüm, provide the audience with a spiritual journey and invite participants to a meditative experience.

Mevlana's understanding of tolerance and loving approach, summarized in his saying "Come, come again, no matter what you are", constitute the basis of the Mevlevi tradition (Güvenç, 2021; Akmaz, 2021; Tok, 2015). The teachings of this tradition still guide many people in their spiritual quests today and have the potential to bring people from different cultures together. Beyond being a religious belief system, it is seen as a universal human heritage. It has turned into a philosophy of life and a spiritual tradition that attracts the attention of not only Anatolia but also the whole world. This tradition is also known for its contributions to the world of thought and art.

Mevlevi order emerged as a consolation to the people in despair during the Mongol invasion of Anatolia. Its foundations were laid in the last years of the Anatolian Seljuk State and it was effective in the establishment and development of the Ottoman Empire (Akay, 2015). It gained importance during the Ottoman Empire and functioned as an official institution of the state. Even some Ottoman Sultans of the period visited Mevlevi dervish lodges, and these visits increased public interest in Mevlevi. Their intertwined relations with the state, especially in the late 18th century and Sultan II. It became more evident during the reign of Mahmud (Akay, 2015). With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Mevlevi order lost its importance, but it continued to live among the public and Sufism enthusiasts around the world with its basic philosophy, teachings and practices such as sema ceremonies (Akay, 2015). Today, it is accepted both as a cultural and spiritual heritage and as a worldview that reflects Mevlana's philosophical thoughts.

The Mevlevi tradition is also known for its rituals and sema ceremonies. One of the most well-known rituals is sema ceremonies. In these ceremonies, whirling dervish whirling dervishes try to establish a spiritual bond. The whirling dervishes symbolize the rotation of the universe and unity with God. Sema ceremonies are accompanied by traditional Turkish music and offer a spiritual experience to the audience. Dhikr is also an important ritual in Mevlevi. Dhikr is repetitive prayers and rituals performed for the purpose of remembering Allah and turning to Him. It has an important place in the spiritual journey of whirling dervishes and helps them establish a spiritual bond. To become a Mevlevi, it is necessary to go through a guidance process that includes certain stages and ceremonies. General steps followed on the way to becoming a Mevlevi: *Intention*: To intend to step into the Mevlevi path and to enter the dervish path under the guidance of a sheikh of the sect. *Asylum*: Applying to a Mevlevi sheikh and entering under his protection. *Ikrar*: Promising to adhere to Mevlevi principles. *Ascetic*: Living in accordance with the disciplines of the sect for a certain period of time and receiving spiritual education. During this period, he performed various services and duties and completed his spiritual education. *Sema Ceremony*: Learning and performing Sema, a ritual dance with different stages and symbolic meanings. *Entering the Sikke Gullab*: Giving coins to a person who has reached a degree and level within the Mevlevi order in a special ceremony and that person being officially recognized as a Mevlevi.

These steps are the building blocks of the Mevlevi order, and each candidate must receive the approval of the Mevlevi sheikh in order to enter this path. Nowadays, the official structures of ceremonies and sects may differ in many places (Sultanova & Ayaz, 2013). Mevlevi order; It has developed as a culture and way of life that encompasses literature, music, philosophy and visual arts. Mevlana's works, Mesnevî and Dîvân-ı Kebîr, are the cornerstones of Mevlevi literature (Bölükbaşı, 2011; Orakçioğlu, 2022; Tok, 2015). Poets and writers were inspired by these works and produced many works reflecting the Mevlevi culture. Mevlevi culinary culture has created a rich culinary tradition where themes such as sharing and gratitude are emphasized at Mevlana's table. The cuisine of Mevlevi lodges has a place intertwined with both spiritual disciplines and culinary art (Akmaz, 2021).

The reflection of the Mevlevi movement on art is multifaceted and deep. This approach to art is an integral part of Mevlevi's aesthetic understanding. Elegance, aesthetics and fine craftsmanship were reflected in other areas of Mevlevi art, especially art forms such as architecture and calligraphy. Mevlevi dervish lodges and zawiyas have meticulous architectural details and are designed to create peaceful environments suitable for deep contemplation and worship. The reflections of Mevlevi culture on art still show themselves as a source of inspiration in many artists and works.

During the proclamation of the Republic and the subsequent modernization process in Turkey, the Mevlevi order and other sects underwent significant changes. With a law enacted in 1925, sects, zawiyas and dervish lodges were banned. It limited the expression of Mevlevi culture and practices in the public sphere. However, even during this period, Mevlevi order was continued to a certain extent in secret or private areas. During the modernization process, Mevlevi order continued its continuity as a cultural and musical heritage. Mevlana's works and philosophy still attract wide attention, and his Sema rituals are watched by many people in Turkey and around the world. As an important element of Turkish culture, Mevlevi order is included in UNESCO's list of "Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity". Mevleviism's strong ties with music and literature continued in this period. Sema music is kept alive through concerts, works and festivals related to Mevlana and Mevlevi. In addition, Rumi's thoughts continue to be interpreted by new generations of writers, thinkers and researchers. In the modern period, Mevlevi order ceased to be primarily a Sufi practice and continued its existence as a cultural and aesthetic thought (Kayaoğlu, 2007).

Miniatures provide important information about topics that have been researched since ancient times. When the miniatures from the Mevlana period are examined, it is seen that the clothes of the Mevlevi and Mevlana are similar to the clothes of the Seljuk period. Mevlevi clothes are the traditional clothes worn by dervishes and reflect the spiritual symbolism of the Mevlevi sect (Atasoy, 2000). Mevlana did not force his disciples to assume any disguise. In Mevleviism, which emerged after Mevlana, a clothing description emerged over time (Ayhan, 2008). Mevlevi have used arakiye, sikke and destar from the Ottoman period until today. They took a seat on the coin. They wore an open shirt and cardigan called tennure on the body, deste-gül on the tennure, and Elifî nemed as a belt on the waist (Orakçioğlu, 2022) (Figure 1). Mevlevi dervishes wear the following garments:

Aba: It is a coarse fabric made of wool and worn on top. It has no collar or sleeves. It covers the entire body. It is an open front garment. If this garment consists of knitted wool and has a thin structure, it is called aba; if it is made of beaten wool and thick wool, it is called kepenek (Gölpınarlı, 2004). It is a plain dress and unpretentious. It is generally preferred by dervishes and those who live in dervishes. Since the dress is flat in structure, it means that the wearer does not care about the world (Öztoprak, 2010).

Nemed: This word, which is of Persian origin, means felt and is the cardigan of the dervishes (Mütercim Asım, 2009, 545). It is the symbol of poverty and love. He has withdrawn from everything and states that he has no business with this world. It is an indication that you are turning to Allah.

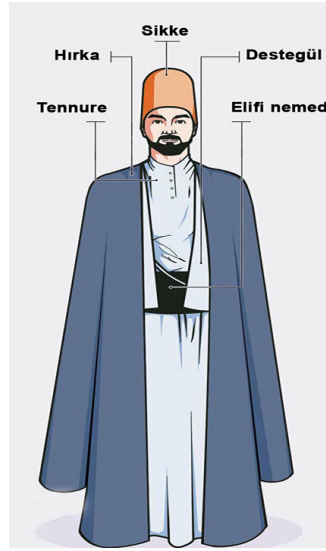


Figure 1. Mevlevi costume (Orakçioğlu, 2022)

Elifi Nemed: It is the belt wrapped around the tennure (Figure 2). It is made of wool. Armor binding in a darker color than the color of the belt is applied to the edge. It is worn by the guides of those who join the sect (Atasoy, 2000).



Figure 2. Elifi nemed (Orakçioğlu, 2022)

Cone, Küleh and Sikke: Cone, a Persian word meaning headscarf, is a high, conical-shaped headdress made of felt, worn by Mevlevi dervishes. What Mevlevis wear is called Külah-ı Mevlevi, which literally means Mevlevi cone (Gölpınarlı, 2004:196). Coin; It is a two-layered cone made of forged felt, growing from bottom to top (Figure 3). It is usually dark brown in color. In a spiritual sense, it represents the purification of the dervish from ego and worldly desires. This title, which expresses the principle of "dying before death", carries a special symbolism for the Mevlevi sect and reflects the spiritual symbolism of the sect together with other clothing elements worn by dervishes (Ateşok & Başaran, 2017; Önder, 1956:78).



Figure 3. Sikke (Orakçioğlu, 2022)

Tennure: It is a wide, white skirt worn by Mevlevi dervishes, tied with a belt at the waist and extending to the ankles (Gölpınarlı, 2004; Koçu, 1967) (Figure 4). This garment symbolizes the renunciation of worldly blessings and the

constant return of heavenly love. This skirt, worn by dervishes whirling around in whirling ceremonies, transforms spiritual elevation and submission into a visual language as it blows with its wide ring that spreads around as they turn.



Figure 4. Tennure (Orakçioğlu, 2022)

Pâlheng: This word, which has Persian origins, means the rope to which guilty people are tied (Translator Asım Efendi, 2009, 576). It expresses that the person purifies his soul from the external environment. Although it is not used in all Mevlevi, it is seen in some sections (Gölpınarlı, 2004:252).

Belt: It is a long fabric belt tied around the waist of the tennure worn by Mevlevi dervishes. It symbolizes spiritual devotion and submission and is worn with tennure. It is an important piece that represents the dervish's determination and spiritual discipline in his spiritual journey.

Robe: It is a long-sleeved and usually dark-coloured outer garment worn over the tennure worn by Mevlevi dervishes. The robe symbolizes the dervishes' humility and expression of their spiritual shell. This clothing is a part of the clothes worn by Mevlevi in their spiritual practices and Sema ceremonies and has a quality that reflects their modest and spiritual lifestyle.

Üçetik or Paçalık: These are trousers, usually white in color, worn at the bottom of Mevlevi clothes. This piece of clothing is located under the tennure worn by dervishes during the sema and contributes to the completion and functionality of their clothing. Mudflaps enable the dervishes to move freely and comply with the rules of etiquette during the sema.

Sandal: It is a type of shoe used as a part of Mevlevi attire, is simple and usually made of leather. It is preferred as footwear and has a feature that reflects the modesty and simplicity of Mevlevi dervishes. It is a traditional dervish shoe worn in Sema ceremonies and religious practices.

Destar: In Mevlevi tradition, the word "destar" is the name given to the headscarf, turban or tulbent wrapped over a special type of headgear called sikke (Top, 2007:63) (Figure 5). Destar is a symbol and sign of rank that has an important place in the clothing of Mevlevi dervishes. In Mevlevi order, wrapping a destar is basically the right of the caliphs and sheikhs and shows the spiritual level of these people and their position in the sect (Orakçioğlu, 2022). Its color and the way it is wrapped may vary depending on the status of the dervish. For example, while caliphs and celebis usually wear a dark purple destar, Hz. The destars of sheikhs who are "sayyid" descendants of Muhammad are distinguished by being green, while the destars of those who are sheikhs in other ways are white. A dervish who is entitled to wear a destar carries this right until his death, and it is even engraved on his tombstone after his death (Orakçioğlu, 2022; Top, 2007). Destar, which usually appears as a part of the special clothes and headgear worn by dervishes during Mevlevi Sema ceremonies, is one of the most distinctive elements that provide the expression of Mevlevi culture. It not only has a religious function, but is also considered an expression of Mevlevi aesthetics and spiritual identity.

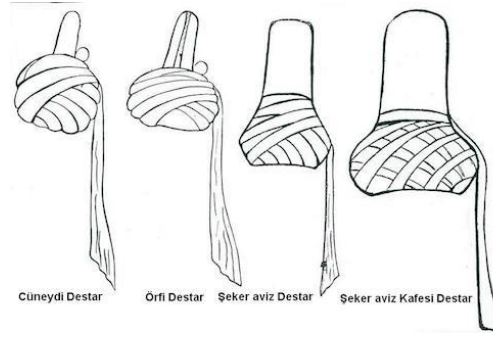


Figure 5. Destar and its varieties (Orakçioğlu, 2022)

Taylasan: It is the name given to the end of the turban that falls on the shoulders (Muallim Nâcî, 2009, 668; Gölpınarlı, 2006b, 5).

Arakiye: It is a skullcap worn under an off-white or brown colored turban or fez made of beaten wool felt or cotton (Figure 6). In the past, everyone wore this skullcap, but later only dervishes started to wear it. The name comes from arak, which means sweat. This fabric has a structure that collects or absorbs sweat due to its structure. Arakiye is worn by different segments of society. Children, loving ladies and dervish lodge service personnel are some of these groups. It refers to a certain position in the dervish lodge. It is worn by the sheikh. When the dress is examined, it stands out that the stitches are carefully made and finely stitched.



Figure 6. Arakiye (Orakçioğlu, 2022)

Cardigan: In Mevlevi culture, the "cardigan" is a traditional garment worn by Sufi dervishes, symbolizing simpleness and modesty. It is a long coat with an open front, no collar and no waist. The cardigan is usually made of wool or linen and is a symbolic element of dervishes, expressing the rejection of worldly wealth and material values (Önder, 1992, 127). In the Mevlevi tradition, the cardigan is given to a dervish by the sheikh of the sect at the first stage of his spiritual journey and is considered an indication of the dervish's dedication to his spiritual journey. At the same time, when the cardigan is given in a rite of passage within the sect, it symbolizes acceptance into the sect, protection and spiritual blessing of the sheikh. It is also seen in Sufi philosophy as a reflection of the process of denying one's own self and surrendering to God's will. In this respect, the cardigan is considered as a sign that the dervish has left worldly life and stepped into a spiritual life. The cardigan worn in the Mevlevi sect is also one of the characteristic pieces of the Mevlevi outfit and is often seen together with the white skirt and sikke (headgear) worn by dervishes during whirling ceremonies. The color and texture of the cardigan may vary to express the dervish's place and rank in the sect (Top, 2007; Önder, 1992; Çelebi, 2006). Apart from Mevlevi ceremonies and customs, the tradition of wearing cardigans is also generally common in different Sufi orders. It can be black, gray and green in color.

Deste-Gül: In Mevlevi, the concept of "deste-gül" is the name given to the bunch of roses held by whirling dervishes (mevlevi dervishes performing the whirling dervishes) during the Mevlevi Sema ceremony. The Sema ceremony is a form of worship and meditation in which dervishes express their love for God and their spiritual state through the cosmic movement of spinning. Deste-gül is placed in the right hand of the whirling dervish and is raised towards the sky. This symbolizes mercy, love and knowledge from God. The left hand can generally be opened downwards with the palm facing upwards. This stance symbolizes the distribution of this mercy received from God to all humanity. Deste-gül, in addition to this movement used by whirling dervishes while whirling, has a wide symbolism that may include roses and rose motifs in Mevlevi culture. The rose is widely used as a symbol of love, spiritual beauty and mystery. Rose images

and the theme of love are frequently encountered in Mevlana's poems. This emphasizes the centrality of rose and love in Mevlevi culture and poetry.

Waistband: It is the name given to the belt woven from wool, worn around the waist, and its edges are covered with leather. It is expressed as a symbol in Mevleviism (Gölpınarlı, 2004, 181). It has stones on it and consists of silk (Önder, 1956, 82; Top, 2007, 164). It expresses devotion to the path of Mevlana.

İstiva: In the Mevlevi sect, "istiva" means verification, domination, and is a stripe, usually green, drawn on the dervish's clothes. This refers to a rise or position of the dervish in the Mevlevi hierarchy, and it means that the person who reaches this position must treat everyone equally and fairly (Gölpınarlı, 2006a, 394 and Gölpınarlı, 2006b, 33-34). The İstiva ribbon is sewn on the coin and extended between the two coincident eyebrows, in the middle, from the top and behind it, that is, parallel to the nape of the neck (Orakçıoğlu, 2022). İstiva also symbolizes that the dervish has reached a spiritual maturity and that he must behave accordingly. Dervishes carrying these symbols are known for their devotion and submission to God in accordance with Mevlevi traditions. The İstiva ribbon can only be worn by dervishes who have reached a certain rank and is considered a symbol that symbolically indicates the spiritual level of the dervish. The concept of İstiva is important in the Mevlevi sect as a symbol of universal justice and balance, as well as showing a spiritual identity and rank.

Theoretical Framework

In the redesign of Mevlevi costumes with AI, symbolic meanings and traditions were taken into consideration. It is an approach that focuses on the symbolic meanings of Mevlevi costumes. Every detail in the design can be reinterpreted by considering its spiritual and cultural meanings. Digital techniques were preferred to create patterns and textures. This theory is effective in the redesign of fabrics.

Importance of Research

Mevlevi is an important part of Turkish culture. Redesigning these clothes is important to preserve traditional values and pass them on to future generations. AI can balance aesthetics and functionality in the design process. It offers a new approach by bringing together both traditional and modern elements. It helps in areas such as fabric selection, pattern creation and innovation in details. This increases the quality of the design. It can offer a sustainable approach by optimizing the use of materials and reduce environmental impact.

Problem and Sub-problem

The main problem of the research;

- Can AI, which is a current issue and known as new technology, be used in the design of Mevlevi garments, a traditional dress?

The sub-problem of the research;

- Is AI sufficient in image detection?

Method

AI is simply the ability of computer systems to have human-like intelligence. It refers to the capacity of computer programs to perform human-like intelligence tasks such as data analysis, learning, problem solving and decision making. This technology is used in many different industries and has become an effective tool for automating business processes, increasing efficiency and solving complex problems. AI is developing rapidly today, affecting many aspects of our lives, and is expected to be used more widely in the future (Pirim, 2006). Adobe Photoshop program was used in the research. This program is both up-to-date and among the most preferred programs. Being more up-to-date and popular helped this program to be preferred. There is a very wide content pool.

By redesigning Mevlevi costumes using AI, it can be carried out more quickly and efficiently without being negatively affected by the change (preserving its essence) and by adding the change to the design. It can save time and effort by optimizing the decision processes in creating patterns and fabric selection (Sultanova & Ayaz, 2013). Thanks to AI, the symbolic importance and spiritual values of Mevlevi costumes can be reflected in the design process. With data analysis and deep learning algorithms, the elements that carry the symbolic meanings of clothes can be reflected in the design

more effectively and accurately. The spiritual depth and meanings of traditional clothes can be combined with modern touches to make them suitable for today's fashion.

Extracting the features of Mevlevi clothes by scanning images using AI can provide great innovation and efficiency in the design process. With this method, each element of the clothes can be scanned in detail and their patterns, colors and textures can be analyzed. Thus, thanks to AI algorithms, the unique features of clothes can be determined and this information can be used in the design process. This can provide great advantages in terms of both time and cost.

Results

Figure 7 shows an example Mevlevi costume. This original design is the first to be identified with AI. AI can make different classifications when describing the figure. These classifications can address different parameters. Some of these parameters; foreground, background, top of the design, back of the design, entire design, colors on the design, patterns on the design, etc. parameters are included. He created 4 different definitions for this image. In the first definition, he described it as "a full body photograph of a young male whirling dervish with an extremely short moustache, a fez hat on his head, a black belt, a white long-sleeved shirt, arms open to the sides, gray background." In the second definition, he defined it as "a full body photograph of an average Turkish man with a moustache, wearing a white whirling dervish costume, with a plain gray background." In the third definition, he defined "Photograph of an attractive, middle-aged Turkish man, with a mustache and black hair, white dervish outfit, plain background, full body shot, dynamic pose." In the fourth and last definition, he defined it as "a photograph of a tall, thin man with a mustache and brown hair, wearing a white whirling dervish costume on a gray background."



Figure 7. Mevlevi Costume 1 (Semazen, 2024)

All these definitions were drawn by AI, but the desired Mevlevi clothes could not be designed in the drawings. No similarity between the drawn designs and the Mevlevi costumes could be found. Regional similarities sometimes occurred. By taking common information from the clothes described above and combining the common ideas of the designs, commands were given to AI and the designs seen in Figure 8 below were obtained.



Figure 8. AI Designs 1

When these designs are examined, the common features of all of them are that they have white tennure, white cardigan, white coin and white support. Elifi Nemed, on the other hand, varies in color and embroidery. Since there is a human figure in the figure, it is placed on the human figure and the common feature of all the figures is that they have hair and beards. Another Mevlevi costume is shown in Figure 9.



Figure 9. Mevlevi Costume 2 (Yoreselkostumler, 2024)

There are 4 different definitions for this figure. Definition one is “sufi whirling in white, full body, png transparent background”, definition two is “whirling dervish in white clothes, plain background, high resolution”, definition three is “swimming sufi, white background, png transparent, cut it out” and in definition 4 “A man in white and black clothes, whirling dervish style, isolated on transparent background. Wearing a traditional Ottoman cap and hat, such as a bathrobe or jins of the period, he dances with his arms raised above his head. The dancer has a dark skin tone, wears a long skirt that reflects behind her as she spins, and a long, cone-shaped brown headdress covering the hair. "No text isolated on a pure white background should appear inside the frame." When the common points of all these definitions are taken, the designs in Figure 10 are obtained.



Figure 10. AI Designs 2

These designs appear to be more realistic when compared to the designs in Figure 8. It can be seen that the alphabet nemed and coins differ in the designs. A different Mevlevi costume example is shown in Figure 11.



Figure 11. Mevlevi Costume 3 (Kaiopoli, 2024)

The description for this outfit is also “A photograph of dervishes performing whirling dervishes in Istanbul, taken in the best photographer style. Very sharp full body shot of her on stage in a dystopian arena, with many people dancing around them, wearing a white dress and black belt covering her head. Award-winning photography, high resolution, hyper-realistic, professional color grading, depth of field, soft shadows, no contrast, clean sharp focus, a dark atmosphere with bokeh” description two also “Dervishes performing whirling dervishes in Istanbul, wearing white conical hats and black belts on their shoulders, with their long flowing skirts, danced in circles on the stage in front of a dark background, while the audience performed in the foreground, photographically. On her feet are white flowing dresses and black leather shoes. The background is dark and many people are watching them from different angles,” and in definition four, “Dervishes performing whirling dervishes take the stage in an event hall, performing in the traditional su/apis style, wearing white, flowing long dresses and black belts. The audience watches them from behind or from the edge of their environment. In the front is a man pivoting in a standing pose in the center with both arms raised to keep them off the ground. He has dark hair covering half of his face, wears a tall red hat that covers only his head and neck, all other parts of his body are visible.” When a design is created with AI by taking common and appropriate definitions from these definitions, the designs in Figure 12 emerge.



Figure 12. AI Designs 3

When these designs are compared to the previously drawn AI designs, it can be seen that the coins were drawn with a more realistic approach. It appears to be designed in a slightly more curved funnel shape. Since there is more than one whirling dervish in the described figure, AI designed it using more than one human figure. Again, it seems that Elifi Nemeds are closer to the original. Another example of Mevlevi costume can be seen in Figure 13.



Figure 13. Mevlevi Costume 4 (Bilgiyegel, 2024)

AI image description one “An elderly Sufi man dancing and twirling in a white robe and turban on a 24mm f/8 black background in the style of an unknown artist,” description two “Asian in white with black hair and beard, wearing a flamboyant turban hat on his head.” A man dances in the middle of the stage. Since successful men do not stay there for life, they wear traditional clothes such as a long dress; they flow forward in the style of their own power against a dark background”, description three “A sufi in white, wearing a turban, twirling on a black background, in the style of a hyper-realistic photograph” and description four “In the center of the frame is a white dervish with a black background. This is a full body shot of him twirling around with his arms outstretched. He wears a turban and long dresses. The lighting is dark. “The shot was shot with a Sony Alpha camera in the style of a dark and moody piece.” When the common points of all these designs were taken and the design was made by AI, the designs in Figure 14 were obtained.



Figure 14. AI Designs 4

Among these designs, the design on the left offers a more realistic and appropriate clothing design than the other designs. Each element of the outfit is designed in a more orderly manner. The color and coins are closer to the original in terms of design and are suitable.

In the study, many different designs were obtained by having AI identify and design sample clothes. These designs are the more suitable ones among the others. However, many faulty designs emerged during the implementation phase. Sometimes clothes are in pieces, sometimes they are designed in different colors, sometimes different clothes are formed, etc. Many faulty designs have also emerged.

Conclusion and Discussion

AI has started to be used frequently in the textile field, as it is used in almost every field. Companies and designers are developing their work in this direction. They are trying to gain a place in the market by keeping up with the developing technology. Technology is moving forward day by day with the discovery of new machines and materials. This development directs designers in this direction. Studies carried out by keeping up with innovation attract the attention of both producers and consumers. Investments are shifting towards this direction.

Bastaban and Sarihan's study discusses the version of AI's imitation of the stylistic features of its artists. Study results; In the resulting images; anatomical problems in figure depictions, composition and technical problems were observed.

Since no detailed experiments were carried out between paid and free versions during the process, no major differences were detected. However, it has been observed that the current AI infrastructure is not very compatible with the idea that artists can take away their professions. Nevertheless, the future status of artificial intelligence, which has a developing structure, may pose a question on the idea (Bastaban & Sarihan, 2024)

In the study, information about Mevlevi order and Mevlevi costumes was given. Information was provided in order to understand the subject of the study (Bölükbaşı, 2011; Orakçioğlu, 2022; Tok, 2015). Research has been done about the past, present and future. Changes have been examined and transformations have been observed. Technical and design information has been sought from numerous studies and theses. The Mevlevi tradition was examined in detail and information was collected about the clothes, which are the subject of the article (Atasoy, 2000). Since clothes have a lot of variety, they are classified under different headings. When the subject of the study was summarized a little more, it was grouped under the heading of clothes, basic level designs were researched and the technical dimension started to be moved on.

In the study, information about AI, a current technology, is given. Usage examples and usage methods of the technology were emphasized. AI studies have been associated with Mevlevi order and Mevlevi costumes (Pirim, 2006). The properties of the clothes were investigated. Its symbolic meanings and symbols were examined along with its features. Information was provided about all stages of the clothes, from raw materials to production. Mevlevi clothes are traditional clothes. It has been passed down for years to the present day. The use of AI in the design and production of Mevlevi costumes not only contributes to the transfer of this valuable heritage to future generations, but also allows it to find a place in the modern fashion world. By utilizing AI, the spiritual and historical significance of these garments can be preserved, the efficiency of the design process can be increased and they can be aligned with current trends. Innovative designs attract the attention of users and manufacturers from all walks of life. AI enables detailed analysis of the complex details of the garment, from its patterns and colors to its textures, allowing its unique features to be revealed and its adaptation to the design process. There are different examples of AI applications at all stages of the production process. In addition, the use of AI-supported production processes offers significant advantages in terms of time and cost by providing more efficient material selection and cutting. In general, AI provides a way to seamlessly merge tradition and modernity in the design and production of Mevlevi costumes, ensuring that their cultural and symbolic significance is preserved while adapting to contemporary fashion sensibilities (Sultanova & Ayaz, 2013). Since it is a new and updated field of work, it is natural for there to be errors. It is thought that more accurate results will emerge by loading more information, improving systems, developing technology, increasing the samples and increasing new applications. Since the system looks at the event only on a figure basis and does not address it from a historical perspective, cultural influences are not visible in the designs. It is thought that with the updates to be made in this direction, the deficiencies will be eliminated by understanding its history. Although the designs are drawn on a computer, the design dimension cannot be seen in some examples. In order to create a clearer design, the same design was drawn repeatedly. There are also regional errors in the designs. No face scratching, no dress scratching, no pattern scratching, etc. Many problems were encountered. All these deficiencies are errors that can be eliminated with updates and regulations in the field. This study also has a detailed explanation about the positive and negative aspects of the system. Designs were produced by utilizing the image recognition, perception and design drawing features of AI. The designs were evaluated and compared. Comparisons were made with current examples.

Recommendations

Studies that examine the history, symbols and rituals of the Mevlevi order in more depth can make significant contributions to the design process. These studies can help design preserve traditional values. Studies should be conducted on how AI algorithms can be integrated with fashion design. In particular, the effective use of AI methods in fabric selection, pattern creation and details should be investigated. Surveys and user experience studies on the needs and preferences of people wearing Mevlevi clothing can increase the functionality of the design and user satisfaction. AI should be researched on sustainable material selection and production methods. This is important both to reduce

environmental impact and to increase the quality of the design. The balance of aesthetics and innovation should be investigated in the redesign of Mevlevi clothing. AI can offer creative approaches that will combine traditional motifs with a modern perspective.

Limitations of Study

This research was carried out by using a limited number of samples and designing the same samples by repeating them more than once.

Acknowledgements

The research lasted 6 months. There are limitations in data quality, model generalization and cultural-artistic understanding. Sufficient hardware and software resources should be available to train the AI model.

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Research Article

The effects of Mevlana's philosophy on aesthetics and art: innovative interpretations inspired by the past

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Abstract

In this research, the relationship between Mevlana's philosophy and art is analysed through the works of artists who have works on Mevlana's philosophy. In this context, artists such as Rembrandt, İbrahim Çallı, Gülsün Erbil, Refik Anadol and Irine Kasrashvili were used as samples. The study aims to investigate how both traditional and modern art is shaped around the themes of Mevlana's philosophy and Sufism. The research is designed as a qualitative case study. By examining the selected works of the artists, the change in aesthetic understanding, cultural and artistic interactions were analysed through content and document analysis. How the transition between traditional and modern art is shaped in the context of Sufism and Mevlevi aesthetics is evaluated. In this context, the research aims to reveal the change and continuity of art from past to present by examining the effects of Mevlevi thought on art and how artists interpret this thought. The works created by artists inspired by Mevlana's philosophy have added new perspectives to social and individual perceptions in different periods. It has been observed that current designs contain similar themes and figures with the past, but changes in style have occurred. Technology was also used in current works, and works were blended with contemporary interpretations as well as classical expressions. In addition, the results of the research show that the artworks within the scope of the research from past to present have mostly dealt with 'whirling dervish' figures with 'high colourism' through the concept of 'whirling dervish'. The stylistic features used by the artists have changed depending on the original attitude of the art. This situation is seen as a promising situation for the future of art.

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Introduction

Mevlana's philosophy emerged in the 13th century as a philosophy of life based on the teachings of Jalaluddin Rumi and deeply rooted in Sufi thought. The influence of this thought on art has manifested itself in both direct and indirect ways, profoundly affecting the aesthetic understanding of traditional Islamic arts over time. Since Mevlana's philosophy is a teaching that encompasses individuals in search of an inner journey and spiritual transformation, this idea has found expression in different disciplines of art. In particular, the aesthetic structure of the rituals and sema ceremonies in Mevlevi rites have been a source of inspiration for artists, and over time these rituals have been transformed into symbolic expressions in different branches of art.

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Considering that abstraction and symbolism are at the forefront in traditional Islamic art, Mevlevi aesthetics can offer a structure that overlaps with this understanding. In visual arts, Mevlevism invites the viewer to an inner discovery by combining mystical elements with symbolic expressions. In disciplines such as calligraphy, miniature, marbling and music, Mevlana's philosophy has left deep traces both thematically and aesthetically. Especially the figure of the whirling dervish, the symbol of Mevlana's philosophy, has existed in art for centuries and has been revitalized with different interpretations in every period.

In the modern art world, Mevlana's philosophy has created a new field of discussion on how traditional Sufi teachings can be integrated into contemporary art. Using technology and modern aesthetic forms, artists have reinterpreted Mevlevi thought and brought mystical elements to the contemporary world. In this context, Mevlana's philosophy appears not only as a historical phenomenon but also as a means of artistic renewal and transformation. This continuity of Mevlana's philosophy in art has continued until today with the artists' efforts to explore spiritual depths and present new layers of meaning to the audience.

In this study, this multi-layered impact of Mevlana's philosophy on art is examined and how aesthetic, spiritual and cultural dynamics are shaped in the context of both traditional and modern artworks. In this context, the works of both local and foreign artists (Rembrandt, İbrahim Çallı, Gülsün Erbil, Refik Anadol and Irine Kasrashvili) were evaluated as a sample.

Literature Review

Mevlana's philosophy

Mevlana's philosophy emerged as a Sufi path shaped around the teachings of Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî. However, after his death, the Mevlevi order was institutionalized by his son Sultan Veled and his close disciples. After Mevlânâ's death in 1273, the organization of the order was completed under the leadership of his son Sultan Veled and it started to spread in Konya (Değirmençay, 2022). Mevlevi lodges functioned as a conservatory, literary school and fine arts education center during their existence, thanks to Mevlana's integration of Sufi teachings with music, sema and poetry. In this context, Mevlevihanes have been centers that have trained the most prominent artists of classical Turkish music, the masters of divan literature and the most distinguished works of fine arts (Küçük, 2006). The value given to art in the Mevlevi Order was shaped by the exemplary life and teachings of Hz. Mevlana, and these teachings were passed on from generation to generation from heart to heart with the method of tekke education and meşk. The understanding of art, which matured in this process, gained a great depth in time and gained a wide appreciation thanks to artists such as Dede Efendi, Şeyh Galip and Zekai Dede, who wrote their names in golden letters in the history of art. These artists not only kept the Mevlevi tradition alive, but also made unique contributions to the world of art (Gönül, 2007). In addition, Sufism, one of the basic building blocks of Islamic culture and civilization, has continued its existence in a new structuring under the name of orders since the 6th century Hijri. In this context, although Mevlana's philosophy, one of the first orders to emerge in the Islamic world, did not spread much beyond the Ottoman borders as an institution, Mevlânâ's works reached a wide geography and were translated into many languages (Kara, 2006).

Aesthetics

According to the American Academic Encyclopedia, aesthetics is defined as a branch of philosophy that aims to examine the basic principles of art and beauty (Welsch, 2002). Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that investigates the nature of art and individuals' perception of beauty. This discipline not only analyzes works of art, but also examines the social function of art and how individual experiences are shaped. Aesthetic theories evolve through different art movements and cultural contexts, offering various perspectives for understanding the universal and personal dimensions of beauty (Adorno, 1997).

Aesthetics and philosophy of art are not the same. While philosophy of art deals only with issues related to art, aesthetics covers many different fields besides art (Nanay, 2019). In other words, aesthetics is a field of philosophy that aims to determine the basic principles of art and beauty (Welsch, 2002). Aesthetics was at one time a more effective epistemology, at another time a more effective ethics, and later a better way of philosophy (Seel, 2005). Aesthetics not only deepens the understanding of art and beauty, but also affects the way individuals perceive the world. By enriching

people's emotional experiences, this discipline allows them to develop a deeper understanding in their interactions with art. As aesthetic understandings evolve, influenced by cultural contexts, they shape societies' value judgments and become an important tool that enriches human experience (Dewey, 1934).

Everyday aesthetics aims to make visible the beauty and significance of the familiar and the world (Forsey, 2013). Everyday aesthetics helps individuals to better understand the objects and experiences around them. By showing that ordinary events can have aesthetic value, it enables them to discover the hidden beauties in everyday life. This process enriches social interactions while offering new ways of expressing feelings and thoughts. Aesthetic experience always depends on a specific context. The aesthetic qualities of a habitat, whether in natural environments or artificial spaces, are a key element of its attractiveness and desirability (Berleant, 1992).

Art

Art is an aesthetic phenomenon that goes beyond human survival needs, involves the process of self-understanding and reflects the spiritual world (Dinçeli, 2020). It can also unknowingly give its audience the ability to think critically, imagine and analyze (Fineberg, 2000). It has existed in every period of human history and has played a central role in expressing emotions and thoughts in an aesthetic way. At the same time, it has played an important role in transferring material and spiritual values to future generations by reflecting the cultural structure of the society to which it belongs (Dinçeli, 2017). Art can only show its effect by appealing to the senses (Adajian, 2018). It is also considered as a unique aspect of human life (Leder et al., 2012). It is a common belief that art and science are often opposed to each other, or even inherently incompatible. These two fields are often considered as polar opposites (Dissanayake, 2015). The idea of art as a means of knowledge can be traced back to Aristotle and Horace. Many artists from different disciplines such as Tasso, Sidney, Henry James and Mendelssohn believed that art contributed to human understanding (Young, 2001). The basic elements of a work of art can include elements such as point, line, form, light, color, texture, mass, space and volume. The way these elements are organized is usually called "design principles". Design principles include scale, proportion, harmonious variety, repetition, rhythm, balance, orientation, emphasis and dominance (Barrett, 1994).

Problem of study

The aim of the research is to discuss how Mevlevi aesthetics and art concepts have evolved from past to present through the works of artists. In this context, some of the works of artists such as Rembrandt, İbrahim Çallı, Gülsün Erbil, Refik Anadol and Irine Kasrashvili related to Mevlana's philosophy were analysed. Depending on this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

- How has the concept of Mevlana's philosophy been handled in works of art from past to present?
- Which colours are mostly preferred over this concept?
- Which figures are mostly preferred in the works?

Method

Research Model

The research was carried out with a case study on a qualitative theme due to the unlimited and uncertain resources. Because qualitative research can be carried out in order to identify and reveal a situation that has depth and at the same time is desired, to determine the links between the interactions of the processes with each other and to make evaluations as a result of the situations reflected in the results. Therefore, access to data for researchers is possible through perception, interpretation and interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Patton, 2002). In such studies, it is necessary to define and explain in detail on the subject on which the study is being conducted.

This research was conducted by reviewing the literature on Mevlana's philosophy and using keywords and documents related to the theme as a source. As a result of these scans, artists with artistic productions on Mevlana's philosophy were determined and the artists mentioned were selected as a sample. The works of the artists were evaluated with the way they handled Mevlana's philosophy from past to present. In addition, the analyses of the works were tabulated and presented in a more understandable way.

Data Analysis

In the research, the data obtained from the works were analysed through descriptive content (Ültay et al., 2021) and document analysis. Content analysis, the data obtained It is based on determining human behaviour and nature by using non-direct means. Here again, as in general qualitative research, it requires an in-depth and meticulously conducted study (Labuschagne, 2003). The content analysis involves extracting and analyzing the smallest meaningful units described within the research field, and representing them in categories and subcategories. (Patton, 2015).

Documents (Art works)

In the research, some works related to Mevlana's philosophy by artists such as Rembrandt, İbrahim Çallı, Gülsün Erbil, Irine Kasrashvili and Refik Anadol were analysed. Information about these works is as follows:

- Rembrandt's 'Sufi Sages' work including Mevlana Celalettin Rumi
- İbrahim Çallı, Mevlevis
- Gülsün Erbil, The Life of a Sufi-Semazens
- Refik Anadol 'Rumi Dreams' project
- Irine Kasrashvili, Mevlevi Dervish

Results

In this section, the relationship between Mevlevi aesthetics and art concepts was analysed through the original works of the artists. In this context, the original works of the artists were examined in terms of colour, figure and style.

Rembrandt

Rembrandt was born in 1606 in a mill on the banks of the Rhine, near the city of Leiden. Focillon identified his birth with the sun. He also said that the artist reinvented the Netherlands with his paintings (Focillon, 1960, p.8). While the painter carefully studied the images and symbols of the Netherlands, he attracted the attention of influential families with his success at a very early age. The artist distinguished himself from other artists with his use of images and light and shadow in his works of this period (Brown, 2009).

Çakır (2019) states the following about Rembrandt's work titled "Sufi Sages":

(...) Rembrandt's "Sufi Sages", preserved in the British Museum, depicts four Sufis talking over a cup of coffee in the shade of a tree. (...) One of these sages is Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, pictured with a coffee cup in his right hand, and the other is Qutbeddin Bilol Muyniddin, with an open book on his knee. (The painter also depicted Muinuddin Chashmi (1142 - 1236), one of the Sufis who reached India with a Turkish army). The third figure in the painting is Qutbiddin Bakhtiyar Kakiy, a disciple of Muinuddin. According to scholars, Qutbiddin Kakiy may have met his compatriot Rumi, who was very young at the time, before he emigrated to India in 1221. The Sultan of Delhi, Eltutmish (born in Balkh and of Turkish ancestry) was a devotee of Sufism and welcomed Qutbiddin very warmly. . The fourth and last character in the painting is Shab Sharaf (Sharafattin Abu Ali Qalandar), a famous figure of his time. He was born in India and therefore the assumption that he met Rumi is not correct. He was also unable to meet the sheikhs of the Chishti order. However, he met Qutbiddin Bakhtiyar Kakiya only in his childhood. Sharafattin's first teacher was a Turkish dervish, Khidr Rumi, who first told him about the great poet and Sufi Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi. Sharafattin also followed the Chishtiyeh sect, which originated in Chishti, a settlement near Herat. He wrote letters and poems of Sufism (Çakır, 2019, p.1).

İbrahim Çallı

İbrahim Çallı was born in the Çal district of Denizli in 1882 and is recognized as one of the pioneers of Turkish painting. Çallı, whose youth years overlapped with the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II, completed his first education at the Rüştüye in Çal and then continued to the Mülki İdadı in İzmir.



Figure 1. Rembrandt's 'Sufi Sages' work including Mevlana Celalettin Rumi (Çakır, 2019)

Although his early years in Istanbul were difficult, his meeting with the Armenian painter Roben Efendi and the painting lessons he received from him during this period constituted an important opportunity for his artistic life. Another critical step in the shaping of his artistic career was his meeting with İzzet Bey, the son of Şeker Ahmed Pasha. This acquaintance brought Çallı into contact with Şeker Ahmed Pasha and his connection with this important painter became a turning point in his artistic career (Baytar & Okkalı, s.127).

In addition to his Orientalist works, the artist also produced works on a different theme, the Mevlevis, like "Cevat Dereli, Cemal Tollu and Fahrünisa Zeid" (İşman, 2017, p.402). Nurullah Berk evaluated these works of the artist as "the most successful works" (Güler, 2011, p.93). It is stated that the artist utilized live models in the Galata Mevlevi Lodge while creating his Mevlevi works (Uzluk, 1957).

Gülsün Erbil

The artist graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts, Department of Painting in 1971. He started his artistic production in Istanbul. He received a scholarship to study ceramics and textiles at Goldsmiths' College in London. In this process, the artist was influenced by the Dadaists and made studies on mystical philosophy. In this context, he realized his first thesis on the subject of "Mysticism" (Bal, 2007, p.160).



Figure 2. İbrahim Çallı, Mevlevis, Private Collection, Oil on canvas (İstanbulsanatevi, 2024)

The artist is also shown as the first artist to use mysticism in painting (Soylu, 2013). He made this expression more effective through abstract paintings. In the context of Mevlana's philosophy, the artist became one of the artists who

pioneered the Sufi art of painting. Especially geometric forms, textural expressions and also the references he made in his works have been the source.

The whole of these expressions of the artist revealed the “Mystical Cycle” process. Thus, the artist's national aspect has moved to an international dimension. Gülsün Erbil expresses mysticism as “the raw material of all religions” (Erbil, 1983-84, p.2).

The artist can be shown among the rare artists who comply with Mevlana's statements in the quatrain titled “Towards Newness” (“How good it is to migrate from one place every day / How beautiful to land in one place every day / How pleasant to flow without blurring, without freezing / Gone with yesterday, my dear, / How many words belong to yesterday / Now it is necessary to say new things”) (Çınar, 2013, p.1). Because the artist closely followed the arts from every culture (such as Byzantine, Renaissance, etc.) and created an art style that emerged from the roots. The last point he has come to is evident as a style that carries references from Islamic mysticism and makes Sufi practices pioneering.

Refik Anadol

Anadol was born in Istanbul in 1985. Refik Anadol, who later lived in Los Angeles California, came to the fore in the field of new media art. He became a prominent artist in this field (Bingöl et al., 2020, p.388).

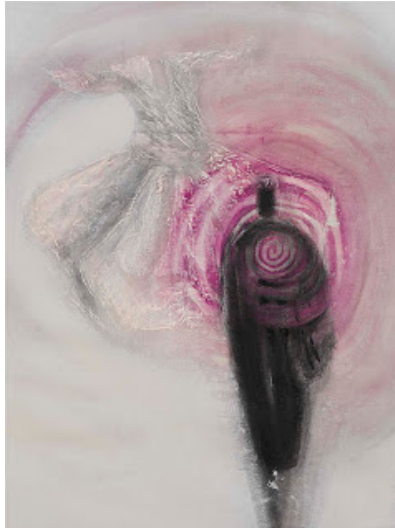


Figure 1. Gülsün Erbil, Life of a Sufi-Semazens (Aksoy, 2009)

Especially photography, moving images and mapping productions can be shown as the beginning of the artist's avant-garde attitudes. The artist has created different perspectives for the audience with geometric forms, especially in his works created in the context of the concept of “infinity”. In addition, large areas were preferred due to the larger size of his works (Özgül, 2018, p.50).



Figure 2. Refik Anadol “Rumi Dreams” project (Dinçer, 2022)

Refik Anadol can create a great resonance with his technology-based works. The “Rumi Dreams” project, which was created under the leadership of Konya Metropolitan Municipality based on Mevlana's life and universe, is an example of this (Figure 4). The project is based on a 6 and a half minute visual experience with AI support. At the same time, documents such as Mesnevi texts, tekke and manuscripts in 26 different languages were brought together with AI. With the support of Elon Musk and the Open AI team, “Rumi Dreams” is presented as a space that surrounds the viewer 360 degrees (Erdoğan, 2022, p.1).

Irine Kasrashvili

Irine Kasrashvili is a famous Georgian textile artist born in Tbilisi in 1958. She graduated from Tbilisi State Academy of Art in 1983. Afterwards, she made important contributions to textile and visual arts. Kasrashvili's association with art has emerged through various international platforms where he has exhibited his distinctive style shaped by Georgian cultural heritage and international experiences. Over time, he has organised numerous solo and group exhibitions around the world. Some of the highlights of her career include winning the first prize in the International Quilt Competition organised by the American Quilt Alliance in 2006 and exhibiting her work in prestigious venues such as the United Nations Headquarters and the US Embassy in Georgia.



Figure 5. Irine Kasrashvili, Mevlevi Dervish, Cyprus Museum of Modern Arts (Near East University (NEU), 2021)

Her artistic style is known for her complex textile works that blend traditional techniques with contemporary artistic expression. For the Cyprus Museum of Modern Arts, the artist Irine Kasrashvili, inspired by the flora of Cyprus, presented three works titled 'Mevlevi Dervish', 'Flowers' and 'Autumn' on canvas. In this way, the artist depicted a scene based on the teaching of Mevlana, namely the dancing whirling dervish (Figure 5). The Mevlevihane in Nicosia on the island of Cyprus, which was conquered by the Ottomans, was converted into a museum in 2002. The oldest traces of Mevlana's philosophy and Turkish Cypriots can be found here. Mevlana's call to tolerance, 'Come no matter what you are', that is, no matter what religion, race or language you are, is exhibited here with the dance of whirling dervishes (NEU, 2021).

Analyses of the artists and their works selected as a sample in the research

In this section, the works of the artists who are the subject of the research on Mevlana's philosophy are analysed. The analyses of the works are handled through differences in colour, figure and style. In scientific research, types of analyses have emerged in each field according to their own internal dynamics (Neuendorf, 2002). In this study, the analyses were made in the form of descriptive content analysis. This type of analysis; around a specific topic it can be defined as a systematic study that offers a descriptive dimension in which all kinds of studies, published or unpublished, can be evaluated. In this way, research or published documents can be evaluated in terms of their trends and results (Suri & Clarke, 2009). The themes and codes are given in Table 1. In addition, the evaluations related to the table are presented in detail behind the table.

Table 1. Analyses of the works on Mevlana's philosophy produced by Rembrandt, İbrahim Çallı, Gülsün Erbil, Refik Anadol and Irine Kasrashvili

Question How has Mevlana's philosophy evolved in artistic works over time?		
Theme	Sub-theme	Codes
Rembrandt's "Sufi Sages" (Figure 1)	Colour	Light-shadow
	Figure	Wise
	Style	Engraving Pattern
	Symbol	Book Tree Fruit
İbrahim Çallı "Mevlevis" (Figure 2)	Colour	Solid colour
	Figure	Semazen
	Style	Schematic Stained Static
	Symbol	Religious ritual
Gülsün Erbil "The Life of a Sufi-Semazens" (Figure 3)	Colour	Loud colourism
	Figure	Semazen
	Style	Abstract, Mystical
	Symbol	Semâ Meeting- Spiral
Refik Anadol "Rumi Dreams' project" (Figure 4)	Colour	Loud colourism
	Figure	Semazen
	Style	New media
	Symbol	Semâ Sublime
Irine Kasrashvili "Mevlevi Dervish" (Figure 5)	Colour	Loud colourism
	Figure	Semazen
	Style	Contemporary
	Symbol	Semâ

General evaluation of the works analysed in the table in terms of their relationship with the artist

When the data in Table 1 are examined; it is seen that the most preferred colour usage in the context of the works handled within the scope of the research from past to present is 'loud colourism' (f=3). The most frequently preferred figure is 'whirling dervish' because it is appropriate in terms of concept (f=4). In terms of style, it is seen that art is differentiated as a field that develops based on originality. In this context, the works do not have a similar style. In addition, within the scope of the symbol sub-theme, which can be expressed as the totality of the messages desired to be given in the works, it is seen that the concept of 'Semâ' comes to the fore (f=3).

Detailed evaluation of the works analysed in the table in terms of their relationship with the artist

The data in Table 1. shows that Rembrandt's 'Sufi Sages' (Figure 1) deals with 'light and shadow' in terms of colour and four 'wise' people in terms of figures. As mentioned in the previous sections, the work is about four sages who are the pioneering names of the concept of Mevlana's philosophy. The images of the sages were intended to be conveyed with the light and shadow used here (Bulatov, 2024). The work was created in 'engraving' style. In addition, the 'tree' in the work, creating coolness under the 'tree', 'divine canopy', the 'fruits' of the tree, 'deeds-actions', and the 'book' carried the means of expressing wisdom (Bulatov, 2024, p.1). İbrahim Çallı's 'Mevlevis' (Figure 2) deals with the 'religious rituals' of 'whirling dervishes' in 'solid colour'. In this work, the artist used a 'schematic', 'stained' and 'static' style (Dağlı, 2021, p.492; Giray, 2007, p.112).

Another artist Gülsün Erbil's 'The Life of a Sufi-Semazens' (Figure 3) shows 'loud colourism', which is also frequently mentioned in the works in the study (f=3). 'While the artist was searching for the language of modern plastic forms with the loud colour attitude he developed against the academic palette, playfulness began to constitute the most serious vein of his productions' (Bacak & Kurt, 2020, p.258). In the same way, the artist placed the 'whirling figure', which is also frequently preferred (f = 4), as a figure in his work. 'Spiral' is seen as another code used by the artist in many of his paintings. The 'spiral' figure can be shown as an important symbol in many scientific knowledge and the universe (Halman & Castle, 1996; trans. Bacak & Kurt, 2020). The artist has also produced works in an 'abstract' and 'mystical' style. In Refik Anadol's 'Rumi Dreams' project' (Figure 4.), the symbols of "whirling dervishes" and "sublimity" are depicted with whirling dervishes as a religious ritual with the use of "new media". Similarly, 'loud colourism' is applied here.

Irine Kasrashvili, on the other hand, in her work 'Mevlevi Dervish' (Figure 5), has handled the 'whirling dervish' show with a 'contemporary' interpretation through the accompaniment of 'whirling dervishes' and 'loud colourism'. When all these works are evaluated, it is seen that the deep respect and religious dimension of Mevlana's philosophy is tried to be reflected through various symbols and figures.

Conclusion

The research aims to reveal the change and continuity of art from past to present by analysing the effects of Mevlevi thought on art and how artists interpret this thought. In the research, works related to Mevlana's philosophy by artists such as Rembrandt, İbrahim Çallı, Gülsün Erbil, Irine Kasrashvili and Refik Anadol were analysed. The results of the research show that the artworks from the past to the present, within the scope of the research, mostly deal with the figures of 'whirling dervishes' with 'loud colourism' through the concept of 'whirling dervish'. The stylistic features used by the artists have changed due to the original attitude of the art. This situation is seen as a promising situation for the future of art.

In particular, the artists made references both in terms of colour and symbols (the 'tree' in the work creates coolness underneath; the 'divine canopy' is the 'fruits' of the tree; 'deeds-actions', and the 'book' is a means of expressing wisdom, etc.). The works created by artists inspired by Mevlana's philosophy have added new perspectives to social and individual perceptions in different periods. It has been observed that current designs contain similar themes and figures with the past, but changes in style have occurred. Technology is also used in current works, and the works are blended with contemporary interpretations as well as classical expressions.

As a result, art has played a very important role in preserving and expressing the essence of the Mevlevi tradition, especially through the representation of the Mevlevi concept (the teachings of Mevlana and the Mevlevi dervishes). Artists have preserved the integrity of this philosophical and spiritual tradition by combining its basic principles with classical and contemporary artistic methods. Their works, such as the depiction of a Mevlevi Dervish, show how technology and modern techniques can be used in art without deviating from the original essence of the Mevlevi concept. This synthesis of tradition and innovation demonstrates the adaptability of spiritual and cultural expressions to the digital age. Current artistic endeavours utilise emerging technologies for wider dissemination and contemporary interaction, while continuing to honour the spirituality, discipline and introspection inherent in Mevlevi philosophy. This ensures that Mevlana's teachings remain alive and influential in modern art and society. For this reason, it is suggested to investigate whether there is a parallel between scientific research on Mevlana's philosophy and artistic works.

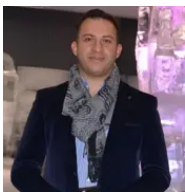
Recommendations

Many exhibitions and similar works are carried out in the fields of art. At the same time, scientific studies are carried out on Mevlana's philosophy. In this context, is there a parallelism between artistic studies and scientific studies on the level of reflections of Mevlana's philosophy in art? a study can be designed for this. Thus, Mevlana's philosophy can be evaluated in two dimensions.

Limitations of Study

Research only five artists (Rembrandt, İbrahim Çallı, Gülsün Erbil, Refik Anadol and Irine Kasrashvili) and their works on Mevlana's philosophy.

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Research Article

Poetic limits of AI: a study on the visual representation of Mevlana's works

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Abstract

This study examines how concepts and themes in the works of Mevlana are visually expressed using Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms. Born in 1207 in Balkh, one of the most important centers of Sufi thought, Mevlana left a rich literary legacy in both poetry and prose. His works, with their profound spiritual messages, have remained influential until today. In today's digital age, artificial intelligence offers new possibilities to interpret and visualize these timeless themes. Artificial intelligence, which simulates cognitive processes such as perception and decision-making, increases efficiency and provides new insights in various sectors. In this study, prompts created with artificial intelligence based on Mevlana's poems were used and how these spiritual themes were expressed visually was analyzed. By adopting the qualitative research method of textual analysis, the study investigates how artificial intelligence transforms Mevlana's poetic language into modern visual forms. By adopting qualitative methods that emphasize the constructed and open-ended nature of reality, this study reveals the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in the field of art and Sufi philosophy. Analyzing the visual outputs produced by artificial intelligence, the article aims to offer an original perspective on how Mevlana's works can be re-imagined in the digital space. This analysis, by focusing on the synergy between artificial intelligence and mystical philosophy, fosters fresh discussions about how technology, art, and spirituality intersect.

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Introduction

Mevlana's literary legacy is richly varied in both poetry and prose. Mevlana's five main works, *Masnavi* and *Divan-i Kabir* are written in verse, while his other three works, *Fihi Ma Fih*, *Majalis-e Sab'a*, and *Maktubat*, are composed in prose. All these works were written in Persian, the literary language of the period, and continue to have an impact on readers with the deep spiritual themes they contain. In this study, an alternative way of visual presentation of Mevlana's works written in verse with the help of artificial intelligence will be sought and the outputs will be analyzed.

AI, a technology based on the imitation of human intelligence, has created new possibilities in the exploration and visual presentation of historical and cultural concepts. AI, derived from the Arabic word "intelligence", is a field that imitates cognitive processes such as human perception, learning, reasoning and decision-making. Today, AI, which provides efficiency and creates new opportunities in many sectors, increases its impact day by day.

This research will examine how concepts and themes in Mevlana's works can be translated into a visual language using artificial intelligence algorithms. The prompts created with AI based on Mevlana's poems will enable the themes of the poems to be expressed through modern visual presentations, and the outputs will be analyzed. In this context, the

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qualitative research method of text analysis will be used to investigate how AI combines a literary tradition with a modern visualization technique.

The Life of Mevlana

Mevlana was born on September 30, 1207 in the city of Balkh, which is today within the borders of Afghanistan. Considered the heart of Khorasan, Balkh was one of the most important centers of Sufi thought in the early 13th century. His real name was Muhammad Jalaluddin and he was given the name “Mevlâna”, which means “Our Lord”, because of the respect and love for him while he was studying science at a young age in Konya. The reason why Mevlana is called “Rumi” is that he lived in Konya, a part of Anatolia, and his tomb is located there (Sutekin, 2019, p.5). His father, Bahaeddin Veled, was born as the son of Hüseyin Hatibî, one of the great scholars of his time, was known as the “Sultan of Scholars” and became one of the most important scholars and Sufi leaders of the period. His mother Mümine Hatun was the daughter of Rükneddin, the Emir of Balkh (Hidayetoğlu, 2016, p.9). It is known that Mevlana, who had a family tree based on important names such as Hz. Hüseyin and Hz. Ebu Bekir, belonged to a family with a deep faith and cultural heritage.

His father Bahâeddin Veled's intellectual differences with Fahreddin Râzî, one of the leading scholars of the period, and his desire to avoid social distances, as well as the approaching Mongol danger, led him to decide to migrate from Balkh to Baghdad (Arpagus, 2007, p.93). Bahaeddin Veled and his family started their migration with the intention of pilgrimage in 1212-1213, passing through Mecca via Baghdad and Kufa, then Damascus, Malatya, Erzincan and Akşehir before reaching Karaman. At a time when most of Anatolia was under Seljuk rule, Mevlana's family left Karaman, where they lived for seven years, and settled in Konya. Mevlana 's father, Bahaeddin Veled, passed away shortly after they arrived in Konya. Bahaeddin Veled, an important Islamic scholar of the period, is also known as Mevlana's first mentor. He taught his son the way of Allah and showed him the depths of Sufism. After his father's death, in his early twenties, upon the insistence of his friends and the people, Mevlana took his father's place and began to give sermons and lectures (Gölpınarlı A. , İbtida-Name, 2014). In addition, with the death of his father, Mevlana's period of first the pulpit and then the lordship began. In Mevlana's spiritual journey, six important people, especially his father, were his spiritual guides. These people were Bahaeddin Veled, Seyyid Burhaneddin, Shams-i Tebrizi, Salahaddin-i Zerkûb, Hüsameddin Çelebi and his son Sultan Veled (Selçuk, 1998, p.69). One of the biggest changes in Mevlana's life began when he met Shams-i Tebrizi, who created a great transformation in his inner world and had an important place in his spiritual journey. In Mevlevi literature, the place where Mevlana and Shams met is referred to as “Meraj'el-Bahreyn”, meaning “the meeting place of two seas”. As a matter of fact, in the first volume of the Masnavi, Mevlana states as follows: It was a single sea, both of which had learned to swim and recognized each other. They were both souls sewn together without being sewn, united (Beytur, 2005, p.112).

After meeting Shams, changes occur in Mevlana 's state and behavior. These two divine lovers, who retreated into seclusion with deep spiritual love in their hearts, chose to devote themselves completely to God. Mevlana 's deep bonds with Shams weakened his relations with the people around him, and his lovers were upset, thinking that Mevlana was distancing himself from them. This caused some discontent. The unexpected disappearance of Shams in order not to cause disturbance caused deep sorrow in Mevlana. Unable to cope with this sadness, Mevlana withdrew completely from his lovers and students and shut himself up. Later, those who caused Shams to disappear felt great regret (Önder, 1992). Mevlana's son Sultan Walad brought Shams back to Konya, but this union did not last long and Shams disappeared in 1247, never to be found again. After his disappearance, Mevlana became reclusive and wrote elegies to Shams. For the rest of his life, Mevlana received great support from Çelebi Hüsâmeddin in writing the Masnavi, one of the most important works of Sufism. Çelebi Hüsâmeddin was an important figure who kept Mevlana's legacy alive after his death. Mevlana, who expressed his inner transformation with the words “I was raw, I was cooked, I was burnt”, passed away on December 17, 1273.

Works of Mevlana

Mevlana's literary legacy is richly varied in both poetry and prose. Of his five major works, two, *Mesnevi-i Mânevî* and *Divan-i Kabir*, are in verse, i.e. poetry. The remaining three works, *Fihi Ma Fihi*, *Majâlis-i Seb'a* and *Mektûbât*, were written in prose. All these works were written in Persian, the literary language of the period.

Masnavi-ye-Ma'navi

The *Masnavi* is the form of verse used in the classical literatures of the Islamic world, but when the *Masnavi* written by Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi became so famous and influential, it became the first work that comes to mind when "Masnavi" is mentioned (Şafak, 2004, p.16). The work was translated into Turkish by Veled Çelebi İzbudak, consists of six volumes and has approximately 26,000 couplets (Şahinođlu, 2017, p.595). The *Masnavi* is a comprehensive Sufi work by Mevlana, written with inspiration drawn from the Quran and Hadith. It imparts universal values such as love, devotion, and virtuous living to its readers. Hundreds of stories in the work deal with topics such as good morals, honesty, generosity, diligence, humility, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, halal morsel, gratitude and worship.

Divan-i Kabir

Divan-i Kabir means "Great Notebook" or "Great Divân" and the work, also known as *Divân-ı Şems, Külliyât-ı Divân-ı Şems*, consists of seven volumes. The work consists of ghazals, rubai and poems. This work, which is a collection of Mevlana's poems reflecting his deep emotional ups and downs and inner journey, especially after the death of Shams, is the sincerest expression of his spiritual world.

Fihi Ma Fihi

Fihi Ma Fihi means 'what is within is within' and is one of Mevlana's three prose works, consisting of seventy-five chapters. It is not directly written by Mevlana himself; instead, it is a work written by Mevlana's relatives and disciples who gathered together the conversations in various assemblies, the opinions he expressed among friends, and historical and social events (Dündar, 2021).

Majalis e Sab'a

It is a work composed of the notes of Mevlana's sermons given in seven different assemblies. Mevlana used poetry as a means of expression, not an end in itself, and in seven of his seven assemblies, he commented on different hadiths to convey his profound thoughts. These hadiths generally focus on the following topics: 1. The way in which the rightly guided societies will be saved, 2. Salvation from crime, awakening from heedlessness through reason, 3. The power in Faith, 4. Those who repent and find the right path will be Allah's beloved servants, 5. The value of knowledge, 6. Diving into heedlessness, and 7. The importance of reason (URL1).

Maktubat

The 147 letters written or dictated by Mevlana to various people to advise them, to do them favors, or to express his thoughts on a subject are collected in this work. Gölpınarlı (2000) translated in Turkish.

Artificial Intelligence

AI is defined in different ways in the literature. The Arabic word 'intelligence' refers to human thinking and understanding abilities. AI is a concept developed by computers that mimics these abilities. In fact, AI can be considered as an imitation of the human mind. AI is a field of science and engineering that imitates the mechanisms of human intelligence such as perception, learning, linking concepts, thinking, memorable problem sorting, communication, inference and decision-making using mathematics and logical systems. In this field, solutions are produced by giving machines similar thoughts, behaviors and abilities (Nacarođlu & Savcı, 2023, p.132). In short, a function is obtained with the data feed and this function is predicted and renewed based on the past.

Today, AI has transformed traditional networks by making them smarter and has captured significant attention from both communities and industries. The impressive and appealing capabilities of AI have led to the integration of more sophisticated communication applications. To handle real-time processing needs, machine learning and deep learning techniques have been increasingly utilized (Qureshi & Newe, 2024, p.4). Machine learning stands as one of the most vital and rapidly advancing areas in technology. Its applications are now widespread, with data-driven solutions

increasingly replacing traditional, manually created algorithms. This shift has not only enhanced the performance of existing technologies but has also paved the way for a wide array of new possibilities that would be unimaginable if each new algorithm had to be manually crafted. A specific area within machine learning, called deep learning, has become an especially potent and versatile framework for deriving insights from data. Deep learning relies on computational models known as neural networks, which were initially inspired by the learning and information-processing mechanisms of the human brain (Bishop & Bishop, 2024, p. 1).

Deep learning enables deeper and more meaningful inferences by processing complex data sets (Safi, 2021). AI applications are accelerating and developing day by day. Considering the possibilities offered by this technology, cost reductions and productivity gains, artificial intelligence is being used effectively in almost all sectors. Today, it helps people in many sectors such as design, health, industry, education and agriculture, increasing productivity and creating new opportunities. By automating routine tasks and enabling people to focus on more creative and strategic work, AI also significantly improves human capabilities in areas such as big data analysis and complex modeling. Its effective presence in many areas such as visualization, analysis of graphics, language processing and voice recognition can be given as examples of the use of artificial intelligence (Kocaman, 2021). The current level of AI suggests that it will be discussed more in the future and new results will emerge (Bastaban & Sarihan, 2024)

Problem of the Study

The aim of this research is to examine how the concepts and themes in Mevlana's works are expressed in a visual language with the use of artificial intelligence algorithms. In this context, Mevlana's poems and themes were written as prompts in artificial intelligence applications and asked to create a visual presentation and analyzed. Within the scope of the stated purpose, answers to the following sub-research questions were sought:

- How are Mevlana's works transformed into a visual narrative through AI algorithms?
- Can an evaluation be made on the aesthetic characteristics of the visuals obtained, such as color, shape, figure, and style?
- Can an evaluation be made about which messages the obtained images give?

Method

Research Model

In the study, textual analysis, a qualitative research method, was used. Qualitative research focuses on the reality constructed by the research. It differs from quantitative research in its purpose, focus, methods and criteria of accuracy. It rejects many of the quantitative assumptions about research based on objective, positivist beliefs about the world and instead sees reality as constructed in the mind of the knower and situated in cultural and historical contexts (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2009, p.179). Qualitative research begins with the examination of research problems that interrogate the meanings that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem through the possible use of specific assumptions, a worldview and a theoretical perspective (Creswell, 1998, p.37). Qualitative research does not use statistics or replication methods as standards of evidence. Statistical analyses cannot be performed because variables are not converted into numbers. Furthermore, qualitative research assumes that the analysis of a text depends on the researcher doing the analysis and the time, culture and situation in which the analysis is carried out. Therefore, a true replication is not possible (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2009, p.170). Qualitative research aims to describe and explain people's experiences as they are. At the end of this process, researchers collect data to support their interpretations. The data obtained in qualitative research are generally not numerical, but rather collected from oral and written texts (Balaban Sali, 2018, p.142). The main difference between qualitative and quantitative methods is that quantitative methods are deductive while qualitative methods are inductive. The deductive approach is a reasoning process that leads from a theory or hypothesis to systematic empirical observation and conclusion. The inductive approach, in contrast, follows a reasoning process in which observation and theory precede hypothesis and interpretation. Qualitative researchers allow the data to 'speak' to them and try to avoid starting the study with a preconceived idea. In this study, a text analysis approach was used as a qualitative research method. Textual analysis involves the identification and interpretation of a

series of verbal or non-verbal signs. Everything encountered in daily life can be considered as a sign (Peirce, 1998, p. 4-5). When analyzing a text, these signs require a comprehensive evaluation of what is used in the text.

Data Analysis and Documents

Qualitative researchers usually evaluate their findings through analyses, interpretations and themes rather than objective conclusions (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2009, p.179). Qualitative studies use methods such as interviews, ethnographic observations, analysis of documents and material culture, and visual analysis. Two main questions should be considered in the data collection process. The first is the level of accuracy in reproducing the data. Fidelity refers to the purity of the data recorded by the actual lived experience being assessed. The second question is the level of structure in the data collection methods. Structure refers to how flexible the methods are in the data collection process. In qualitative research, low structure is preferred. For example, when evaluating data collection procedures, one should ask whether the methods provide opportunities to change questions, to record insights as data are collected, and to return to previous data to determine the direction of subsequent data collection.

While in quantitative research data analysis follows data collection in a systematic way, in qualitative research the process is iterative. Data analysis should take place after the initial data has been collected, and this initial analysis should shape the focus and strategies for subsequent data collection. Thus, errors in the data collection process can be identified and addressed at an early stage. Furthermore, instruments, questions and methods can be changed, adapted and reorganized throughout the data collection period. In this way, the results guide the methods (Johnston & Vanderstoep, 2009, pp.188-191). In this study, the way the data was collected was based on two works of Mevlan , Divan-i Kabir and Masnavi. The focus on these two works is related to the fact that they are both more widely known and read by the society and more frequently encountered in the literature. Masnavi is considered to be Mevlana's most comprehensive and profound work. The stories and teachings in it offer a deep understanding of Sufi philosophy. Therefore, it provides rich and layered content for visual outputs. Divan-i Kabir, on the other hand, consists of poems that express Rumi's deep relationship with love and God. The power of poetic expression contains many aesthetic and symbolic elements that can be transformed into visual designs. Both works are among the most widely read and studied works of Rumi. This increases the potential of the visual output to reach a wider audience. These two works have attracted intense academic interest in the field of Sufism and literature. This provides a solid foundation of literature and allows for connections to be made with previous studies.

Results

In this section, designs were made to transform Mevlana's works into original visual presentations through artificial intelligence. In this context, the connection of the original works we created with Mevlana 's works was examined in terms of color, figure, and style.

Mevlana's description in the following couplets in Divan-i Kabir, whose warnings and suggestions are as valid today as they were then, has been translated into a visual presentation with artificial intelligence (Figure 1):

(...) You can find treasure, but you cannot find life... Find yourself, because this treasure will not stay with you, it will pass through your hands (Gölpınarlı, 1974, p.287).



Figure 1. Ayça Aydođan Kaymaz, AI work (DALL-E), 2024

Capturing the essence of Mevlana's quote about finding oneself and the transient nature of worldly treasures, the image created with the DALL-E artificial intelligence program uses warm tones (orange, red, yellow) to symbolize the spread of an energetic journey. The presence of round and fluid forms in the image symbolizes the transformation of the human soul during an inner journey, expressed through these fluid forms. The small size of the treasure object held in the hand emphasizes that worldly treasures are temporary and small, and that the real wealth lies in the inner interaction. The positioning of the figure in the center emphasizes the principle of "self-knowledge" in Sufi thought. The combination of all these visual elements emphasizes Mevlana's theme of "find yourself" and offers a meaningful spiritual experience.

In Mevlana's Masnavi, there are expressions stating that he does not find it right to speak openly and that it is necessary to speak according to the level of the interlocutor (Yaran, 2007, p.23). His description in the following couplets in the Masnavi has been translated into a visual presentation with AI (Figure 2):

(...) Wish, yearn; but wish in moderation, yearn; a straw cannot lift a mountain...If the sun, which illuminates the world, comes a little closer, everything will burn (Gölpınarlı, 1985, p.59).



Figure 2. Ayça Aydođan Kaymaz, AI work (DALL-E), 2024

With these lines, Mevlana tells someone who desires Mevlana to speak openly that this is not appropriate, emphasizing that while the sun is used as a symbol that gives life and illuminates, it can also become a destructive force when taken to extremes. In the visual created with the DALL-E artificial intelligence program, the sun is a great power, and it is visualized by depicting that the abuse of power can lead to great destruction. In general terms, everything has a balance, and too much of everything is harm and too little is inadequacy. The warm and intense color palette used in the image makes the viewer feel both the pressure of warm colors and the danger. The distribution of the sun symbolizes its destructive nature and uncontrollable energy. These distributions create a dramatic effect in the image and encourage the viewer to be careful. In addition, although the sun has a great effect on the background, the distance to Rumi and the encounter with him creates a sense of depth in the image. The surreal style used in the image emphasizes the deep and mystical aspects of Sufism.

One of the subjects Mevlana mentions in his works is the greed for wealth. He advises that the pursuit of possessions enslaves people, that we should be generous rather than stingy, and that the real freedom is to lead a life full of benevolence (Yaran, 2007, p.31). In the Masnavi, Mevlana compares generosity to the branch of the cypress of paradise and his description in the following couplets has been translated into a visual presentation with artificial intelligence (Figure 3):

(...) Close your lips, open your hand full of gold; give up the miserliness of the body; put forth generosity.... This generosity is a branch from the heavenly cypress; woe to him who takes away such a branch of heaven! (Gölpınarlı, 1985, p.44).



Figure 3. Ayça Aydođan Kaymaz, AI work (DALL-E), 2024

With these lines of Mevlana, he emphasizes the need to share one's material possessions with others and states that people should distribute their wealth generously instead of holding it tightly. In the visual created with the DALL-E artificial intelligence program, the use of golden yellow tones stands out as a symbol of generosity and spirituality, emphasizing how precious this virtue is by stating that generosity is one of the branches of the tree of paradise. The gold pouring from Rumi's hand reflects this inner richness and the act of sharing and reinforces Mevlana's advice of generosity. In addition, the transformation of the gold poured from Rumi's hand into cypress branches expresses that worldly values have gained a spiritual meaning and symbolizes spiritual ascension. The combination of surreal details with visual elements, the curves of the cypress branches express the continuity of generosity and spiritual display, while the branches combined with fluid lines impressively represent the tranquility of generosity in line with Mevlana's words.

Mevlana also mentions humility and modesty in his works. He praises the humility symbolized by the blessing of the soil by giving the example of the soil being humble and serving all living creatures by growing various fruits and grains.

The description in the following couplets in Masnavi has been translated into a visual presentation with artificial intelligence (Figure 4):

(...) The wheat entered the earth from the heights and then became a spike, became agile and grew tall. The seed of every fruit is first in the ground; then it sprouts from the ground and grows tall (Gölpınarlı, 1985, p.59).



Figure 4. Ayça Aydođan Kaymaz, AI work (DALL-E), 2024

Mevlana's verses on humility and modesty express the need to use one's talents and opportunities to benefit others, and to live a humble life by avoiding ostentation and boasting. In the visual created with the DALL-E artificial intelligence program by symbolizing humility with soil, spiritual growth is symbolized by the wheat merging with the soil and growing upwards. The predominant use of gold and earth tones in the image symbolizes the fertility of wheat and its connection with the earth. The color gold reinforces both earthly and spiritual wealth. In addition, the fluidity of the lines used in the image emphasizes the calmness and harmony of Rumi and the ears of wheat with nature and a sense of movement from the earth to the sky.

Conclusion

The city of Balkh, where Mevlana was born, located in what is now Afghanistan, was considered one of the most important centers of Sufi thought in the early 13th century. Mevlana left a rich literary legacy and wrote various works in both poetry and prose. Of his five main works, the Masnavi and Divan-i Kabir are in verse (poetry). His other three works, Fihi Ma Fihi, Majalis-i Seb'a and Maktubat were written in prose and all works were written in Persian, the literary language of the time.

Today, AI stands out as a field of science and engineering that can imitate human thought. AI, which simulates mechanisms such as perception, learning, inference and decision-making, is used effectively in many sectors such as design, health, industry and education. In this context, expressing Mevlana's thoughts and teachings in a visual language using AI algorithms offers the opportunity to build a bridge between past and present technology. In this study, the concepts and themes in Mevlana's works were visualized with AI algorithms. In this context, AI applications such as DALL-E produced visual presentations based on prompts inspired by Mevlana's poems. While Mevlana's themes such as "find yourself" and "the transience of spiritual treasures" come to life with the use of warm tones; fluid forms reflect the inner journey of the human soul. Symbols such as the treasure held in the hand emphasize the transitory nature of worldly values. The pressure of colors that make the viewer feel danger depicts Mevlana's thoughts that "too much of everything is harmful". Mevlana's verses on generosity are depicted by AI using gold and yellow tones. The

transformation of the gold spilled from Rumi's hand into cypress branches expresses that worldly riches have gained a spiritual meaning. The valorization of generosity as a virtue is emphasized by the graceful curves of the cypress branches. Supported by fluid lines, this depiction of AI impressively presents the viewer with the spiritual value of sharing. Furthermore, Mevlana's theme of humility is depicted by the AI with the symbols of earth and wheat. The ears of wheat combined with the fertility of the soil symbolize the journey of human self-knowledge and harmony with nature. The earth tones and golden yellow colors used in this work support the theme of both earthly and spiritual wealth. Furthermore, the wheat taking root in the earth and rising to the sky symbolizes inner growth and humility.

Then Mevlana's mystical teachings are translated into the visual language of the modern age with AI, it is revealed how mystical thoughts come together with today's technology. AI programs such as DALL-E have shown that the valuable themes written by Mevlana in his time can be reinterpreted today and offer a different perspective to the audience. These visuals prove that artificial intelligence is not only a tool for artistic expression, but also an effective tool for conveying spiritual experiences. The meeting of Mevlana's words with AI offers a new spiritual journey born from the combination of the past and the future.

This study evaluates the transformation of Mevlana's mystical teachings into modern visual language through AI by building a bridge between the past and the present. AI applications have enriched the visual representation of the concepts and themes in Mevlana's works and enabled the reinterpretation of Sufi thought with contemporary art and technology. AI has been used not only as a means of artistic expression, but also as an innovative tool that enables the presentation of spiritual and philosophical content on a visual platform. In this context, the study aims to contribute to the literature from several perspectives.

First, the images generated with artificial intelligence offer a unique perspective on how traditional spiritual content can be reinterpreted in digital art. This study shows that images generated with AI develop a new understanding in the field of digital art by expressing the deep spiritual themes in Mevlana's works with visual metaphors. This offers new perspectives for the literature examining the interaction of visual arts with spiritual content. The study demonstrated the capacity of artificial intelligence to effectively visualize themes of deep and symbolic content such as Sufi philosophy. In this context, it contributes to the literature that AI technology is not only a technical tool but also a powerful tool for the expression of symbolic narratives and spirituality. This contribution can form the basis for research on how artworks produced with AI can be used in the interpretation of spiritual and cultural contents.

It also revealed the potential of artistic productions made with AI to analyze and re-present Mevlana's thoughts. Mevlana studies, which are generally based on written sources in the literature, have been carried to a visual dimension with this study and a different research method has been put forward. This situation shows that AI-supported artistic analysis can be used as an innovative method in future research on Mevlana's thoughts. The adaptation of Sufi thought to digital art through AI raises new questions about the potential interactions between these two disciplines. Although the combination of AI and Sufi thought is a rare topic in the literature, the findings of this study provide a basis for new research at the intersection of the two fields. In this context, the study opens new research areas in the literature on how the spiritual dimensions of Sufism can be blended with technology and expressed through AI.

The study shows that AI can play a broader role in philosophical and spiritual content. This points to a potential to increase the impact of AI technology on future artistic, literary and philosophical works. It is noteworthy that via microstock images of AI, AI is in some way producing the symbolic conditions of possibility of itself, says Romele (2024, p.139). Microstock images depicting AI are algorithmized images; they are still produced by human beings but with the AI already in view—both in the sense that the algorithmic success of these images is fundamental for their producers and in the sense that we can imagine a future in which human producers will be pushed completely out of the loop. The interpretation of deep content such as Mevlana's thoughts through artificial intelligence can enable artistic productions and intellectual themes to reach wider audiences, and this is an important contribution to the literature on how (Romele, 2024, p.139). can be used more effectively in spiritual content.

In summary, the visualization of Mevlana's Philosophy with AI in this study aims to offer a new way of how traditional philosophical and spiritual concepts can be combined with modern technology. In this context, the

contributions to the literature offered by the study expand new research possibilities both in the field of Sufi philosophy and in the field of AI and digital art. This bridge between artificial intelligence and mystical thought provides a reference point for future studies and encourages new questions about the relationship between technology and spirituality.

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Research Article

Visual representation of Mevlana's Philosophy in paintings from the middle ages to the present¹

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Abstract

Mevlevism is a Sufi tradition founded on the teachings of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi in the 13th century. Known for its unique whirling ritual called the Sema, Mevleviism emphasizes love, compassion, and the unity of all beings. Mevlevi dervishes, or semazenens, express these spiritual concepts through their graceful movements and music. Mevlevism, known for its profound spiritual philosophy, music and whirling rituals, has inspired artists across diverse cultures and periods. The visual language of Mevlevism has captivated miniature painting artists, orientalist painters and Turkish painters who have infused their paintings with these evocative images. Western art sources from the Middle Ages to the present century feature prominent depictions of Mevlevi figures, Sufis, and dervishes. These portrayals often emphasize their distinctive appearances, such as their dance movements, ceremonial attire, and clothing styles, to capture the viewer's attention. While 18th-century European art focused on detailed and captivating depictions of places, figures, and ceremonies, the 19th century saw the emergence of Orientalist influences. This trend evolved significantly in the 20th century, with artists like Osman Hamdi Bey adopting a more allegorical and diverse approach to the subject. The captivating performance of the whirling dervishes and the rich, mystical symbolism associated with Mevleviism continue to inspire artists, offering a deep well of creative possibilities. By analyzing artworks from various regions, the study explores how the Mevlevi's distinct spiritual and cultural motifs—such as the Sema dance, dervish attire, and mystical iconography—have been visually interpreted and reinterpreted. Methodologically, the study utilizes a historical-interpretive approach, assessing both Eastern and Western artistic depictions to reveal evolving perspectives on Mevlevi philosophy. The findings underscore the Mevlevi Order's role as a vital subject in art, embodying both specific religious symbolism and universal themes of spirituality and transcendence.

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Introduction

Mevlevism, exemplifies how shared beliefs and philosophies can transcend cultural and societal boundaries. This powerful tradition, with its emphasis on love, compassion, and unity, has resonated with people of diverse backgrounds for centuries. Mevlana's message of tolerance and universal love has been widely studied and admired, captivating individuals from various faiths and inspiring them to embrace a more inclusive and compassionate worldview. The daily

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lives of dervishes, particularly the Mevlevi order, have served as a potent source of inspiration for artists, notably painters. From early miniature paintings to later classical, Orientalist, and modern works, artists have consistently demonstrated a fascination with this subject. The West's growing interest in Eastern cultures during the 19th and 20th centuries, fueled by travel and exploration, significantly contributed to this artistic engagement. Many Western travelers, initially encountering Mevlevi practices by chance or through recommendations, were deeply impressed and often sought out further encounters with the Mevlevi order. The dissemination of Rumi's *Masnavi* in English during the 20th century further broadened Western awareness of Mevlevi philosophy and practices. Travelers from diverse backgrounds, including writers, painters, journalists, and diplomats, were drawn to observe and experience Mevlevi culture firsthand during their travels. Many of these travelers, captivated by the unique lifestyle and rituals of the dervishes, not only documented their observations through writing but also engaged in artistic representations, either personally or by collaborating with other artists. Artists have been captivated by the mesmerizing movements of the dervishes, the serene ambiance of the *semahanes*, and the profound spiritual experiences associated with this unique tradition, translating these elements into a diverse range of artistic expressions. These artistic representations provide valuable insights into the multifaceted ways in which different cultures have engaged with and interpreted the mystical and philosophical tenets of Sufism.

Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi is one of the most important thinkers and poets of Sufism. He was born on September 30, 1207, in the city of Balkh, Afghanistan (Khorasan). Contrary to popular belief, Mevlevism, in which Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi is regarded as a *pir* (patriarch) was not founded by Mevlana. It is a sect that emerged in Konya after the death of Mevlana on December 17, 1273. It is known that it was founded by his son Sultan Veled, grandson Arif Çelebi and his friend Hüsameddin Çelebi in order to transmit Mevlana's teachings to next generations.

Mevlana, in his own time, had not pursued a sheikhdom case. He was a reformist. He had established a humanity, a unity, a mausoleum of love. Those who adopted this path which developed with music and dance, fed on love and temptation, but not with a temptation that made a man ecstatic and immersed in mystical illusions, but with the temptation that spread through his personality, spread to people, the universe, loved him, fell in love with him, gave him their being, found themselves and humanity in him (Gölpınarlı, 2006, p. 35).

The concept of Sufism is important for understanding the Mevlevi philosophy. The philosophical definition of the word Sufism is "the religious and philosophical current that explains the nature of God and the formation of the universe with the understanding of the unity of being". The theological definition of the word is "The effort to live the lifestyle proposed in the Qur'an and practiced in the life of the prophet; Islamic mysticism" (sufism, t.y.).

According to Prof. Dr. Neşet Toku, the sufi path of the Turkish-Islamic thought tradition is fed by three basic sources, and the combination of these three sources shapes the flow of the sufi river;

The first of these is the bedouin-desert life. The discontent against the city and the luxurious life and the determination to lead a simple life have caused such a reaction against worldly activities. That is why Sufi piety includes a bedouin life more. The second is Pythagorean Hellenism and Alexandrian gnosticism, which permeated Judaism and Christianity. These thoughts, which lived in the same geography for a thousand years before the birth of Islam, were undoubtedly transferred to the thoughts of Muslims during the process of Islamization. Pythagorean Hellenism, while transferring the doctrine of reaching the truth through the path of *ishrak* (mysticism-eschatology) to sufism; Gnosticism taught that the soul following a simple life through virtue and contemplation should desire to reunite with God and the possibility of this. The third is that Muslims learned from the Asian lands they conquered the approaches of Buddhism and Shamanism to condemn this world, to withdraw from the world for a contemplative and ascetic life (Toku, 2000, p. 205).

In the Sufi thought of Mevlevism, dedicated to beauty, tolerance, sincerity and simplicity, the goal is to reach the true knowledge of existence. According to the Sufi belief, the way to obtain this knowledge also includes experiences such as inward looking and individual enlightenment. Individuals who devote themselves to this life and orientation on the path of Sufism are called *sufis*.

Sufis and Dervishes

In the Islamic society on the 8th century, the attempt to analyze the world has become widespread by keeping it in line with the understanding of civilization. In a sense, people who adhere to Platonist views, stay away from the tendency to pursue knowledge on earth and devote themselves to God, renounce the material world, desire a mystical life, have begun to be called dervish or sufi. In the dictionary of the Turkish Language Institute, the word Sufi is used synonymously with mystic; It is defined as "a person who devotes himself to God by adopting the beliefs of Sufism, an Islamic mystic". The origin of the word comes from Arabic.

The term "dervish" is first seen in the form of <dermscler / durmishlar> in 1481 in the book dedicated to the Ottoman Empire by George the traveler from Hungary. The word is of Persian origin (drigu, driyosh, daryosh) and has two separate meanings in pre-Islamic Zoroastrian culture, such as a miserable and poor person and a person seeking spiritual awareness. Although the original meaning of the term has not disappeared with the collapse of Zoroastrianism and the rise of Islam, it has become more mysterious and ascetic (Zarcone, 2013).

There are many Sufi orders, and their diversity is due to their origins in different lodges. Sufism often clashed with the central authority of Sunni Madrasah. Sufis began to catch up by including poverty and reckless life in the understanding of Islamic mysticism, especially in rural areas. Despite the different manifestations of these Sufi orders, there are similarities in their status and in the responsibilities of figures engaged in social and political life, as well as in their clothes, musical instruments and accessories. Shortskirts and long scarves are common parts of the costumes of dervishes (typical representatives of Sufism). Some also wear wrist or anklebracelets, necklace, pendants or earrings The word 'sufi' was also used along with 'dervish'. While the words dervish and sufi referred to the same representation in ancient times, the meanings of the words have become to contain some differences today (Shams and Farrokhfar, 2020, p.108).

The Dervishes, who often appear in the travel diaries of European travelers between the 15-19th centuries, live on the path of Sufism has a unique representation that decouples from the Mevlevis and Sufis. Prof. Dr. Fikret Tutan who has done research on the Ottoman Miniatures Album at the John Rylands Library of the University of Manchester describes those dervishes as extraordinary sufis.

The dervishes we could place in the second group in the album are dervishes who have isolated themselves more from the ties of the world and society, which we can call unusual sufis, are members of various western heterodox sects who live simply with their clothing and lifestyle. Their common features include wearing as few clothes as possible, shaving hair, eyebrows and beards completely, and sometimes wearing large ring-shaped earrings in the ear (Turan, 2015, p. Dec. 9).

Sema

The sema ceremony performed by Mevlevis accompanied by music includes symbolic gestures, items and movements. In the Sema ceremonies, where the formation of the universe, the existence of humanity, the love of God and the effort to reach truth, goodness, beauty, morality and God are represented, the clothes of the Semazens and the items they use also have symbolic meanings.

Sema was defined in the circular of the Republic of Turkiye Ministry of Culture and Tourism dated 22/10/2008 as: "A ceremony that symbolizes the degrees of the path to reach Allah, contains religious-sufi elements and themes in it, and thus includes detailed rules and original practices". (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2008) Mevlevism and Sema ceremonies are one of our intangible cultural heritages with a history of 8 centuries old. UNESCO declared the Sema Ceremony a masterpiece in 2005. Sema was added to the "Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity" in 2008. The Sema is a mystical ceremony in which the simplified soul in Mevlevism experiences the possibility of reaching God. Sema is used in Mevlevism as a kind of worship accompanied by rhythm and music, performed by spinning and turning a wheel around the heart from right to left (Gölpınarlı, 1977, p. 290).

It is accepted that there is a feature in the sema that brings a person closer to Allah and elevates him, and that it is an occasion for creating love and attraction among Mevlevi (Uludağ, 2005, p. 168-178). Throughout the sema, a person embarks on a journey from the periphery towards both the center of the universe and the center of man's own existence. This dance also makes the body the temple of the soul and a positive element in a spiritual alchemy that some masters

define as 'the spiritualization of the body and the embodiment of the soul', and the body 'realizes the soul' (quoted by Baytar and Okkalı, 2020).

In Western sources, "Whirling Dervishes", "Dancing Dervishes" or "Dance of the Dervishes" are usually described and illustrated. The dances performed by the dervishes were a very attractive show for the western travelers of the period. The ritualistic dance 'sema', which the Mevlevi maintain today, is the reason why they are mentioned with the words "Whirling" or "Dancing" in the travel diaries published in ancient times. Different cult groups are also mentioned in the same sources. These are Mevlevi with the name "Mevlevi order", Rufais with the name "Rifa'i order" and Kadiris with the name "Kadri order".

Theoretical Framework

This study employs a multidisciplinary framework drawing upon art history, religious studies, and cultural studies to investigate the artistic representations of Mevleviism. Key artists like Jean Leon Gerome, Osman Hamdi Bey and Cemal Tollu offer crucial insights into how Western and Eastern artists have depicted Mevlevi figures, rituals, and symbolism. Scholars such as Baytar & Okkalı, Güler, and Shams & Farrokhfar provide valuable context by analyzing the socio-cultural and historical significance of these representations. Additionally, the philosophical and theological dimensions of Mevleviism are explored through the works of scholars like Gölpinarlı, Grierson, Işık, and Toku. The study will examine how Orientalism influenced these depictions, how modern and contemporary art reinterpreted them, and how Mevlevi imagery has contributed to the construction of religious identity. By analyzing works by artists like Van Mour, Gritchenko, and Yvon (Western) and Osman Hamdi, İbrahim Çallı, and Fahrelnisa Zeid, the research aims to demonstrate that Mevlevi representations are not merely aesthetic objects, but rather complex reflections of cultural identity, religious beliefs, and artistic expression.

Literature Review

A search conducted on the YÖK Academic platform revealed 4,395 academics associated with the keyword "art." When the search was narrowed down to "painting," the number decreased to 1,175, and further to 63 for "fine arts." Based on the data entered by academics, 966 theses were found under the "painting" discipline. A search for "Mevlana" yielded 696 articles, of which only 25 were within the "Fine Arts" domain. Among these 25 articles, 8 were categorized under "Art History" and only 2 under "Visual Arts." When searching for "Mevlana," 213 theses were found, with only 3 of them falling under the "Fine Arts" category. A search for "Mevlevi" resulted in 363 articles, 59 of which were in the "Fine Arts" domain, and only 3 of these were specifically in the "Visual Arts" field.

A literature review conducted on academic research in Turkey highlighted a significant deficiency in the number of studies under the headings of "Art History" and "Visual Arts" within the broader category of "Fine Arts."

Importance of Study

This study seeks to contribute to a growing body of scholarship on the artistic representations of Mevleviism. By focusing on the works of Turkish artists, it aims to offer a unique perspective on how this significant spiritual tradition has been visually interpreted within a specific cultural context. While Western artists often emphasized the exotic and orientalist aspects of the Sema, Turkish painters, with their deeper cultural and often personal connections to Mevlevi philosophy, may have offered unique insights into the mystical and spiritual dimensions of this tradition. This study endeavors to identify and elucidate these unique perspectives, thereby enriching our understanding of the diverse artistic responses to Mevleviism. Furthermore, this research aims to contribute to the preservation and dissemination of Turkey's rich artistic heritage, providing valuable insights for art historians, cultural scholars, and religious studies scholars interested in exploring the complex interplay between art, religion, and culture in the Turkish context. This research aims to contribute to the limited existing scholarship on artworks depicting Mevlevi dervishes within the history of painting. Through a rigorous analysis of these artworks, the study will explore not only their formal and stylistic characteristics but also the underlying artistic and philosophical perspectives of the artists who created them, thereby providing valuable models for future research in this area.

Aim of the Study

Western artists, frequently influenced by Orientalist perspectives, often emphasized the exotic and sensational aspects of Sufism, focusing on the visual spectacle of the Sema and the dramatic portrayal of dervishes. In contrast, Turkish painters, with their deeper cultural immersion and often personal connections to Sufi traditions, may have offered unique interpretations that emphasize the mystical, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions of Sufism. This study aims to address this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of artistic representations of Mevleviism created by Western and Turkish painters. By examining their stylistic choices, thematic concerns, and the underlying cultural and philosophical assumptions that shaped their work, this research seeks to identify and articulate the distinct artistic perspectives brought to bear on the depiction of this significant spiritual tradition, ultimately contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the history of art by highlighting the diverse ways in which artists from different cultural and historical contexts engage with and interpret religious and spiritual themes.

Method

Research Model

This research employs a historical and interpretive model, analyzing visual artifacts across different eras and regions. The study categorizes artistic representations by stylistic approaches, cultural origins, and the evolving perceptions of Mevlevi imagery. The article thoroughly covers primary sources, including manuscripts and paintings, and incorporates scholarly interpretations. The extensive use of visuals enhances the technical quality, allowing a detailed examination of aesthetic elements and historical context.

Documents

The documents analyzed include Middle Eastern miniatures, European traveler illustrations, and Orientalist paintings, along with artworks by modern Turkish painters. This selection represents diverse perspectives on Mevlevi portrayals.

Table 1. Selected documents for research

Figures	Artwork	Artist	Date
Figure 1	A dervish from the Ilkhanid State miniature art	-	14 th century
Figure 2	Dancing Dervishes	attributed to Master Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād	1480
Figure 3	Two Dervishes having a conversation,	attributed to Mehmed Siyah Qalam	-
Figure 4	The illustration of the dervish	Nicolas de Nicolay	1580
Figure 5	A Wandering Dervish	-	1620-1650
Figure 6	The Whirling Dervishes	Van Mour	1720-1737
Figure 7	The Dance of the Dervishes	attributed to Robert Pranker and Thomas White	1796
Figure 8	Dancing Dervishes by the Kadiri	-	1790
Figure 9	Ceremony of Dervishes from the Rūfai Sect	-	1790
Figure 10	Dancing Dervishes by the Mevlevi Order	-	1820
Figure 11	Whirling Dervish	Jean Leon Gerome	1895
Figure 12	Rūfai Ceremony	Adolphe Yvon	1879
Figure 13	The Dervish Ceremony	Fausto Zonaro	1910
Figure 14	The Tortoise Trainer,	Osman Hamdi Bey	1906
Figure 15	Whirling Dervish	Alexis Grichenko	1920
Figure 16	Mevlevis	İbrahim Çallı	-
Figure 17	Mevlevis	Alexis Grichenko	1921
Figure 18	Mevlevi	Mahide Arel	1958
Figure 19	Mevlevis	Mümtaz Yener	1998
Figure 20	Mevlevi	Aliye Berger	1960
Figure 21	Mevlevis	Fahrelnisa Zeid	1952
Figure 22	Mevlevis	Cemal Tollu	1968

Figure 23	Mevlevis	Cemal Tollu	-
Figure 24	Mevlevis	Cemal Tollu	1958

Analysis

A comparative analysis is used to evaluate iconographic themes, symbolic attire, and the context in which Mevlevis are depicted. The analysis considers both stylistic and cultural factors that influence the portrayal of Mevlevis across various artistic traditions.

Process

The research process involves collecting artworks, categorizing them by historical period and origin, and interpreting their visual elements. The study systematically examines the continuity and transformation in Mevlevi representation from medieval art of painting to contemporary painting.

Findings

Through a chronological lens, this section will examine paintings that depict dervishes, Sufis, and Mevlevis within the broader context of art history. The analysis will focus on identifying specific visual elements that signify the subjects' identities and will explore how Western and Eastern artistic traditions have represented these figures in contrasting ways.

Examples from medieval Eastern miniature painting

Dervishes, sufis and mevlevis were among the subjects dealt with by painters (nakkaş) in the ages when the Islamic geography kept alive the tradition of miniature painting. The first dervish figures took place on miniature art of Middle East and the Far East in the 14th century. One of the infamous miniature painters was Mehmed Siyah Qalam and according to theories there are figures in his compositions that are suggested to represent dervishes. There are also dervish figures are depicted in miniatures which has survived from the Ilkhanid State (14th) to the present day (Christies, Arts & Textiles of the Islamic & Indian Worlds, 2024). Iranian miniature painting was developed in the 15th century, especially under the patronage of the Timurid (1370-1507) and Safavid (1501-1736) dynasties. and it has reached its peak in 16th century.



Figure 1. A dervish from the Ilkhanid State miniature art, 13x9.4 cm, 14. century, Iran, (Christies, Art of the Islamic and Indian Worlds, 2024)

In the miniatures of these ages, a rich symbolism appeared, in which worldly and religious themes were deeply processed. The life of Muhammad and religious stories are illustrated. Religious motifs have become an important element in miniature painting as indicators of spiritual thought and idealism. In addition to the religious miniatures, painters (nakkaş) also influenced by the everyday life and social events of the period. Artists such as Ustad (Master) Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād have depicted their social observations in a detailed style and have produced masterpieces with high artistic value. Cultural exchange and the patronage system are together referred to as the epochs in which the magnificent works

of Iranian miniature painting were produced through 15th and 16th centuries. Dervish, sufi and mevlevi figures are found among the miniature paintings that have extant today.

Miniature named *Dancing Dervishes* attributed to Master Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād (15th century) is the best example of dervish-themed miniature paintings from Iranian art. In the painting, four dervishes dancing in the middle of a crowded group of figures are depicted as forming a circle. On the right side of the composition there is a musician group consisting of three people. The effects of ecstatic dance on dervishes can be seen by the viewers. The work is the oldest examples reflecting the poetic and spiritual life of the Islamic world against the grotesque dervish illustration of European artists that appeared in the 16th century.

In the works produced in the Middle East, Asia and Far East, scenes from Masnavi, various dance scenes, views from everyday life are also depicted.

“Given the significant social roles of Sufis in the fifteenth century, it is reasonable for them to be reflected in the paintings. It is also worth considering that other theories about the time range in which Siyah Qalam's paintings were produced most often coincide in the fifteenth century.” (Shams and Farrokhfar, 2020, p.110)



Figure 2. Miniature titled *Dancing Dervishes* attributed to Master Kamāl ud-Dīn Behzād from the *Hafiz Divan*, Iran, 1480, (Metmuseum, 2024)



Figure 3. Miniature entitled Two Dervishes having a conversation, attributed to Mehmed Siyah Qalam (Roxburgh, 2005)

The theories that the grotesque demon (satan) figures we see in the paintings of the Mehmed Siyah Qalam represent the Sufis are a topic of discussion that remains up to date. These grotesque and terrible images uploaded to the Sufis can be presented as evidence of the tense political conflicts of the period.

The gathered iconographic evidence indicates that the grotesque figures and demon-like creatures are related to Sufism. Indeed, the images depict Sufis who are represented as demons. However, there is not much more in the paintings to identify to which Sufi order these Sufis belong...Steinhardt says that the Chinese paintings that were inspiration sources for Siyah Qalam's paintings show a contrast between the Mongols and Chinese and indicate the discontent of Chinese painters due to Mongolian domination during the Yuan era in China. Answering the main question of the article, a social and cultural milieu containing a political conflict in which Sufism is a side, and that might have resulted in a protest by artists affiliated to a court can be suggested as the social context of Siyah Qalam's paintings (Shams and Farrokhfar, 2020, p.109).

The most important miniature painter who influenced the Western painters of the period was Levni. Levni has depicted the daily life of Istanbul, appearances of individuals, their lifestyles with a detailed observation. Levni, one of the last masters of Ottoman miniature art, is thought to have influenced European painters with his compositions on the subject of dervishes. "Levni's miniature called *Kalender Dervish*, which he made during his own period, also influenced the famous painter of his period, Jean Baptiste Vanmour, Vanmour made a painting called *Mevlevi Dervishes*, which he made in response to this miniature of Levni" (Irepoğlu, Renda, Bull, & Nicolas, 2003).

In European art, the earliest dervish illustrations are the engravings in Nicolas de Nicolay's book *Quatre Premiers Livres des Navigations et pérégrinations orientales*, produced in 1555 and published in 1568. Nicolas Decolay visited the Ottoman Empire between 1551 and 1552. However, as can be understood from Nicolay's book in the 16th century, the illustrations that are a subject of curiosity for European audiences, in the words of Prof. Dr. Fikret Tutan, *they are extraordinary/eccentric dervishes*. The sema ceremonies of the Mevlevi has become a show that travelers who come to see Istanbul watch with interest in 17th century. The first painting known to depict the dance of dervishes in European painting art is dated 1654. This painting, which is thought to belong to an Austrian engraver, Franz Hermann, Hans Gemminger or Valentin Mueller (Öller, 2005, p. 131). There are three dervish groups that have attracted the interest of western travelers and researchers, and therefore their readers, in the 16th and 17th century. Prof. Dr. Fikret Tutan defines the first group as eccentric dervishes, including mostly kalenders, who came to the Ottoman Empire from Asia and India. These Eccentric dervishes, who beg for food and money, dance in the streets and perform various shows, were distinguished from the begging bowls and their appearance. The other two groups are the Mevlevi (Whirling Dervishes)

and the Rufais (Howling Dervishes). There were two tekkes belonging to Mevlevis and Rufais in Istanbul in the 18th century. An article in a French magazine called *Le Magasin Pittoresque* (1839) stated that the Mevlevis and the Rufais were the most distinctive sects of the Sufis with their ascetic and eccentric methods, and as their names indicate (Whirling and Howling), Mevlevis danced and the Rufais chanted. “In brief, the interest of the Westerners in the performances of these dervishes comes from the fact that they appreciated the beauty of the dances of the first order, while being horrified by the howling of the second (Zarcone, 2013, p. 51)”

Gestures, movements and symbols in sema have become important inspirational things for painters and over time those elements have become indicators representing sufis and dervishes in the art of painting. French orientalist painter Jean Leon Gerome (1824-1904), Flemish painter Jean Baptiste Vanmour (1671-1737), known for his whirling dervish paintings, Italian Fausto Zonaro (1854-1929), known by the title of Ottoman palace painter, are the artists who painted the Mevlevis in their works before modern art era.



Figure 4. The illustration of the dervish from the 1580 edition of the book *Quatre Premiers Livres des Navigations* by the French geographer Nicolas de Nicolay, (Ziletti, 1580)



Figure 5. A Wandering Dervish, Ottoman miniature, 1620-1650, (Christies, Arts & Textiles of the Islamic & Indian Worlds, 2024)

One of the oldest oil paintings of sema belongs to Jean Baptiste Vanmour. Vanmour came to Istanbul in 1699 with the French ambassador. He has depicted the daily events from the Ottoman palace and Istanbul as a subject in his works. Vanmour's painting called *The Whirling Dervishes*, which he produced in the 18th century, is one of the important works on the subject of the Mevlevi. Today, the work is exhibited with other masterpieces of art history at the Rijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. It is estimated that the painting was made between 1720 and 1737. The Sema Ceremony is depicted in the composition. The Mevlevihane of Pera, where the Sema Ceremony was held, has been processed with all the details. Elements such as the embroideries on the dome and carpet, window guards, nails of the wooden cladding on the floor are evidence of the artist's observation skills and craftsmanship. In the foreground of the composition, there are figures watching the sema on the left and right.

On the left side, the musicians (*mutrip*) located on the mezzanine floor and the wooden stairs can be seen. Each one of the whirling dervishes (*semazen*) has depicted in a different dance move. The dim atmosphere in the interior adds a spiritual effect to the painting. The artwork printed and published in 1712, formed a reference to the artists that interests in same subject.

There are several engravings in different editions of *Ignatius Mouradgea D'ohsson's Tableau général de l'Empire Othoman* which published 1790, titled *Dance of the Dervishes of the Melevi Order, Exercices des Derwischs Rufayis, Dance of the Dervishes of the Kadri Order, Exercices of the Dervishes of the Rifa'i Order*. The album is one of the most important publishes has works depicting the rituals of Mevlevi, Rufai and Kadiri sects in Istanbul (Laskaridis Foundation, 2014).



Figure 6. *The Whirling Dervishes*, oil on canvas, 76x101 cm, (Van Mour, 1720-1737)



Figure 7. The Dance of the Dervishes, attributed to Robert Pranker and Thomas White in the book published for Frederick Calvert's collection Eastern Clothes, engraving entitled the interior view of a Tekke in Pera, Istanbul, 1796. (Grierson, 2015)



Figure 8. Dancing Dervishes by the Kadiri Sect from the 1790 edition of the book Histoire de l'Empire Othomane, (Laskaridis Foundation, 2014)



Figure 9. Histoire de l'Empire Othomane, Ceremony of Dervishes from the Rūfai Sect from the edition of the book made in 1790, (Laskaridis Foundation, 2014)



Figure 10. Histoire de l'Empire Othomane, Dancing Dervishes by the Mevlevi Order from the 1820 edition of the book, (Laskaridis Foundation, 2014)

Mevlevis in the modern painting

The interest that painters on Mevlevis and other sects has also maintained its importance in modern painting art. But in the 19th century, documentary illustrations in the diaries of travelers and collection albums were replaced by large oil paintings by orientalist painters.

The French orientalist painter Jean Leon Gerome who used the elements of eastern culture also painted dervishes in his works. In his painting “Whirling Dervish” dated 1895, he depicted a dervish while dancing. As an orientalist painter, he synthesized his academic painting style with an idealistic point of view. Gerome’s dervish is whirling in the middle of a group of other dervishes who are chanting in a mosque-like interior. Gerome has depicted two groups of dervishes in his work. Those are “Whirling Dervishes” and “Howling Dervishes” as they are often described in European sources. Gerome’s dervish figures look like represent eccentric dervishes by their appearance. On the left side of the composition, a young man with a white turban is sitting on the floor. It is as if the sema is being presented to him as a show. There are

musicians in standing and sitting positions around this young audience. When the sema scene in Gerome's painting is carefully examined, a critical opinion can be reached that this should not be the most correct angle and movement to depict a whirling dervish. The right arm of the whirling dervish is not visible, and he stands as if motionless.

Compared to Vanmour's painting, the Whirling Dervish Gerome's painting resembles a photo frame in which the image is frozen. The dervish rises by stepping on the tips of his bare feet. It can be said that Gerome's semazen evokes a ballerina.



Figure 11. Whirling Dervish, oil on canvas, 72.5 x 95 cm, (Gerome, 1895)

Another ceremony that attracted the attention of tourists, writers and painters who visited Istanbul in the 19th century is the chanting rituals of the Rufais. The rite of the Rufais consist of two parts. In the first part, the dervishes insert skewers into their bodies and faces. The purpose of this demonstration is to prove that God protects the dervishes. The second part of the rite is more interesting than the first part, and therefore it was the subject of a painting by two important painters, the French and Italian orientalist. In this ritual, the sheikh of the Tekke walks on the backs of the disciples who are lying face down on the ground. It is believed that happiness and health are given to the disciples that the sheikh walks on his back (Zarcone, 2013, p. 54-55).

The French painter Adolphe Yvon and the Italian painter Fausto Zonaro are among the orientalist painters who painted the ceremonies of the Rufais, who are called "Howling Dervishes" in western sources.



Figure 12. Rüfai Ceremony, oil on canvas, 46.4 x 55.5 cm, (Yvon, 1879)



Figure 13. The Dervish Ceremony, oil on canvas, 100 x 201.3 cm, (Zonaro, 1910)

In the Ottoman Empire, one of the realistic paintings about mevlevis belong to Captain-ı Derya Hacı Ahmed Vesim Pasha, dated 1888. Th composition shows a sema ceremony in the Galata Mevlevihane (Okkalı, 2014, p. 106). Captain Derya Hacı Ahmed Vesim Pasha's gouache painting has also a documentarily importance. It is made by an amateur painter on the border of tradition and modernity. (Işın, 2010, p. 142).

We can say that the figure in Osman Hamdi's painting *The Tortoise Trainer* represents a dervish. In the work, which has two separate versions completed in 1906 and 1907, the old man holds a Ney, a sufi music instrument.



Figure 14. The Tortoise Trainer, oil on canvas, 122 x 222 cm, (Hamdi, 1906)

The bowl on his back is likened to the begging bowl used by the dervishes. “According to some, what hangs on a man’s back is a kashkulufukara, a begging bowl made of coconut or ebony, formerly used by dervishes and beggars” (wikipedia, 2023) Considering that the old man represents a sheikh dervish and tortoises represent Sufis, an allegorical interpretation of the teacher-student relationship in Mevlevism stands in front of us.

After a long break, the subject of the Mevlevis appears in the paintings of Ibrahim Çallı. His friendship with Russian painter Alexis Grichenko laid the groundwork for painting about Mevlevis. Russian painter Alexis Grichenko, born in Ukraine in the 1920s, fled the civil war in Russia and stayed in Istanbul for a temporary period, between 1919 and 1921. He formed a friendship with Ibrahim Çallı, they studied together. It is seen that Çallı, who works with an impressionist and academic painting style, turned to a different style under the influence of Grichenko. The influence of these two artists, who worked together by forming a friendship in Istanbul, is clearly seen in the works on the subject of the Mevlevis. In Çallı’s Mevlevi compositions, there is a transition from impressionist realism to abstraction, perhaps under the influence of Sufism, which he had just encountered and observed.



Figure 15. Whirling Dervish, watercolor on paper, (Gritchenko, 1920)



Figure 16. Mevlevis, oil on duralit, 60 x 74 cm, (Çallı, t.y.)



Figure 17. Mevlevis, oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm, 1921, (Güler, 2014)

The Mevlevi Lodges and other tekkes closed in 1925 by the new Turkish Republic's laws. The sema ceremony of start up again in the 1950s with the interest in the subject of painters comes alive again. Painters such as Maide Arel, Aliye Berger, Ruzin Gerçin, Mümtaz Yener, Cevat Dereli, Fahrelnisa Zeid and Fikret Otyam have created unique

compositions that are processed by the abstraction reflex, although they are figurative. At this point, the negative common denominator of the works is that they are without content. In those paintings and engravings, melevism and its indicators have been able to reach formalistic variations.



Figure 18. Mevlavi, oil on canvas, (Arel, 1958)

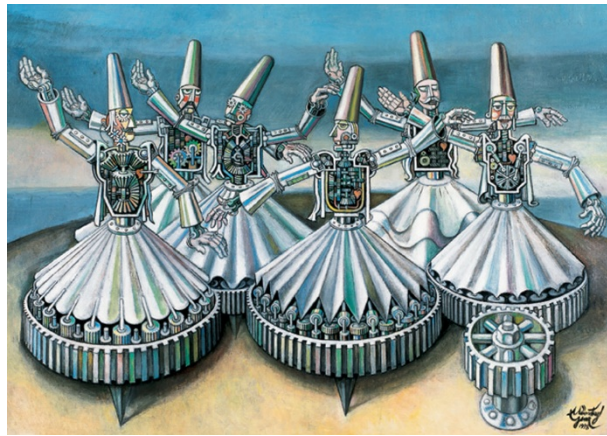


Figure 19. Mevlavis, oil on canvas, (Yener, 1998)

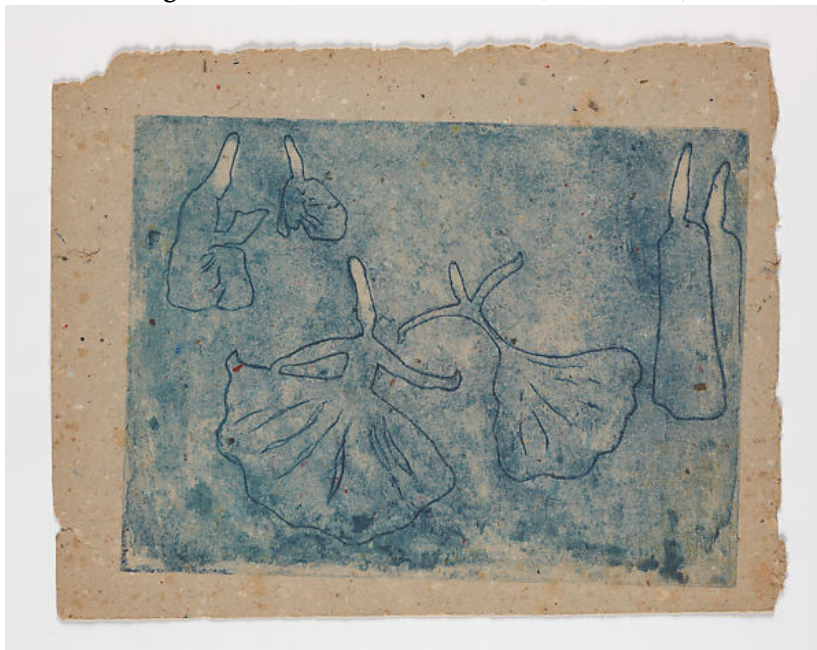


Figure 20. Mevlavi, printmaking, 31,1 x 38,7 cm, (Berger, 1960)



Figure 21. Mevlevis, Sharpie on paper, 35 x 50 cm, (Zeid, 1952)

At this point, Cemal Tollu's works depicting the Mevlevis deserve special attention in our history of art of painting. The primary goal in Tollu's figurative compositions is to be able to represent the human being. The human body and identity are positioned beyond the formal pictorial representation in the picture. In Tollu's Mevleviler series, there is an observation and a search for meaning that differs from other painters.

Cubist forms are distinctive features in 3 paintings by Cemal Tollu depicting the Mevlevis. In the horizontal canvas dated 1968, the Arabic inscription 'Hazrat Mevlana' attracts viewers attention. In another canvas whose date is unknown (Tollu, Mevleviler, t.y.), a whirling dervish fills the space at the top of the composition alone. In Tollu's 1958 painting The Mevlevis, whirling dervish is depicted as a butterfly emerging from a cocoon. The blue color that dominates the painting carries a feeling of peace, happiness and serenity. This deep blue emptiness represents an unknown and unrecognizable (noumenon) space. In the work, metaphysical and mystical thoughts are depicted without conflicting with each other. Tollu did not prefer the documentarian reflexes of his predecessor painters but brought the supersensible things of Sufism into the subject of the painting. This is the sensitivity that places Cemal Tollu in a different position among the works of painting on the subject of the Mevlevis.



Figure 22. Mevlevis, oil on canvas, 75 x 100 cm, (Tollu, Mevleviler, 1968)



Figure 23. Mevlevis, oil on canvas, no size information, (Tollu, Mevlevis, t.y.)



Figure 24. Mevlevis, oil on canvas, 81 x 116 cm, (Tollu, Mevleviler, 1958)

Conclusion

In the history of the art of painting, the interest in sufis, dervishes and mevlevis has maintained its vitality throughout the ages. Important differences in these works appear in the painters' approaches to the subject. From the Middle Ages, Mevlevi, sufi and dervish images stand out in paintings in western sources up to the century with their external appearances, dances, ceremonies or clothes in the context of fashion that will attract the attention of the viewer. In particular, the interior depictions of the tekkes were often preferred in the works that were reproduced by printing and included in the travelogues of travelers. In works produced in the Middle East, Asia and the Far East, the position of the communities to which the dervishes are connected in the political conflicts diversifies their representations of identity. In the Mongolian and Chinese struggle, the identities represented by the dervishes were transformed into grotesque images from place to place under the influence of the belief and thought that the painters were parties to.

In the 18th, European artists painted places, figures and ceremonies with full details that will attract the attention of western viewer. In 19th century art, there is an influence of orientalist thought in the approach to the subject. Since the beginning of the 20th century, there has been a divergent allegory-laden prominence in the approach of painters such as Osman Hamdi bey to the subject. However, this intuition loses its effect with the productions of our painters who approach the idea of modern painting art with formalistic preferences. Cemal Tollu's view of the Mevlevi has brought a completely different sensibility back to the agenda, and together with Tollu, the reflections of conceptual art thought unique to our country in the art of painting have been felt. Tollu's sufis are in the mood of search with the artist's cubist interventions, just like atomic particles, one but together, in a transcendent dimension. Other painters who continue to process the subject continue to have a rush to formally depict the visuality of the Sema in a descriptive style. In art of painting, Mevlevi continue to be a preferred subject although not as much as before. However, new media art and alternative production methods opened by digital art also attract the attention of young artists. How the new generation of artists will handle the subject is an element of curiosity.

Limitations of the Study

While this study provides a broad analysis of Mevlevi representations in art, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the selection of artworks is largely based on availability and documented works, which may exclude some lesser-known pieces, especially those not widely circulated or digitized. Additionally, the study focuses on visual arts, primarily painting, thus omitting other forms such as literature, music, or performance, which also play significant roles in representing Mevlevi culture and philosophy. Further research incorporating these additional forms could provide a more comprehensive understanding of Mevlevi representation in the arts.

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Research Article

The musical representation of unity, divine love, and inner journey in Graham Hair's Sufi Couplets

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Abstract

This study provides an in-depth analysis of the symbolic and semiotic dimensions of Graham Hair's composition Sufi Couplets, exploring how it encapsulates the themes of unity, divine love, and the inner spiritual journey central to the mystic philosophies of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and Yunus Emre. By employing a musical semiotics approach, the research examines Hair's specific compositional choices—such as his use of 12-tone equal temperament (12-EDO), intricate vocal harmonies, and the continuous drone sounds produced by the harmonium—that collectively embody and reflect these profound mystical concepts. Rumi's philosophy of Wahdat al-Wujud (unity of being) is musically symbolized through the sustained harmonium drone, representing the unchanging and eternal nature of the divine presence. The concept of transformative divine love is manifested in the dynamic melodic leaps and shifts within the vocal lines, mirroring Rumi's notion of ascension toward the divine essence. Furthermore, the theme of the inner spiritual journey is emphasized through repetitive rhythmic patterns and the harmonium's constant tone, which together create a meditative and immersive experience for the listener, akin to the practices of Sufi meditation. Grounded in hermeneutics and musical semiotics, this study demonstrates how Sufi Couplets effectively bridges Eastern mystical ideals with Western musical aesthetics. By integrating elements from both traditions, the composition offers a universal narrative that transcends cultural and linguistic barriers, presenting transcendental themes in a manner accessible to a diverse audience. The findings contribute to the field of intercultural musicology by showcasing the capacity of music to convey complex philosophical and spiritual concepts across cultural boundaries. This underscores the role of music as a universal language capable of fostering intercultural understanding and spiritual exploration.

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Introduction

Musical semiotics is a field that examines the ways in which musical elements generate meaning, exploring how a piece acquires significance both through sounds and cultural codes. Studies in this area focus particularly on understanding how music, especially in mystical and religious-themed works, transcends being merely a phenomenon of sound to represent spiritual and philosophical values (Monelle, 2001). The semiotic theories of Charles S. Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure provide a comprehensive framework for the process of meaning-making in music, while Peirce's concepts of icon, index, and symbol suggest that music can construct layers of meaning on both cultural and spiritual levels (Turino,

1999). In this context, the philosophy of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207–1273) inspires the use of music and art as symbolic narratives carrying profound meanings.

Rumi's philosophy is shaped around the themes of the Unity of Being (Wahdat al-Wujud) and divine love, embracing the belief that all existence is a reflection of God and that humans must undertake an inner journey to reach the Divine (Schimmel, 2011). Rumi employed music, dance, and poetry as mediums to convey this philosophy through art, successfully transmitting spiritual teachings to wider audiences during his time. According to Rumi, "Music is a language that God uses to reach us; this language reveals the hidden emotions and love within the soul" (Rumi, as cited in Chittick, 1983, p. 42). This idea not only led Rumi to centre music as a spiritual ritual, especially in Sufi music and the Sama ceremony, but also inspired numerous modern works that represent his philosophy through art.

From the perspective of musical semiotics, Rumi's philosophy offers a symbolic narrative carrying spiritual and mystical meanings. Translating this narrative into music entails employing symbolic elements to provide the listener with a mystical experience that transcends mere sound (Kramer, 2021). Themes such as divine love, the transformation that love creates in the human soul, and the inner journey, which are central to Rumi's work, are expressed through music. The symbolic and profound structure of this music aims to bring the listener into contact with the divine. For example, Rumi's expression, "Burn with love so that you become ashes; for from those ashes, the soul's liberation arises" (Rumi, as cited in Nicholson, 1978, p. 96), reflects the transformative power of music from a mystical perspective. This notion can be transformed into a symbolic musical narrative through elements such as expansive melodic intervals, pauses, and rhythmic repetitions.

During a period of profound social and political transformations in medieval Anatolia (13th–14th centuries), marked by the Mongol invasions and the weakening of the Seljuk Empire, Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi (1207–1273) and Yunus Emre (1240–1320) emerged as two of the most influential exponents of Islamic mysticism (Sufism). The widespread social and economic uncertainties of this period directed people towards spiritual quests, increasing the popularity of Sufism. Both Rumi and Yunus Emre emphasised divine love, the quest for unification with the Creator, and the importance of the inner journey in their works, serving as responses to the chaotic atmosphere of their times and aiming to strengthen individuals' spirituality. However, they expressed this common goal using different styles. Rumi, in works such as the *Masnawi* and the *Divan-e Kabir*, used rich symbolism and philosophical language to delve deeply into Sufi concepts. In contrast, Yunus Emre reached people from various segments of Anatolia using a simple style close to the vernacular. The intellectual worlds of both poets were shaped around common themes such as unity (Wahdat al-Wujud), divine love, and the inner journey of the individual (Schimmel, 2011; Lewis, 2000). In this context, Franklin Lewis states in his work *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West* that "Rumi and Yunus Emre wove the fundamental principles of Sufism into the cultural fabric of Anatolian society and profoundly influenced future generations" (Lewis, 2000, p. 345).

Sufi Couplets and Graham Hair

As a contemporary musical interpretation of this mystical heritage, Graham Hair's work titled *Sufi Couplets* holds significant importance. In this piece, Hair draws inspiration from the poems of Yunus Emre, integrating Western musical instruments such as soprano, mezzo-soprano, and digital harmonium within the framework of 12-tone equal temperament. By doing so, he creates a synthesis between Eastern and Western musical traditions, translating Sufi concepts into a universal language. This approach resonates with William Chittick's assertion in *Sufism: A Short Introduction* that "the universal messages inherent in Sufism can be expressed through different cultures and art forms" (Chittick, 2000, p. 12).



Photo 1. Graham Hair

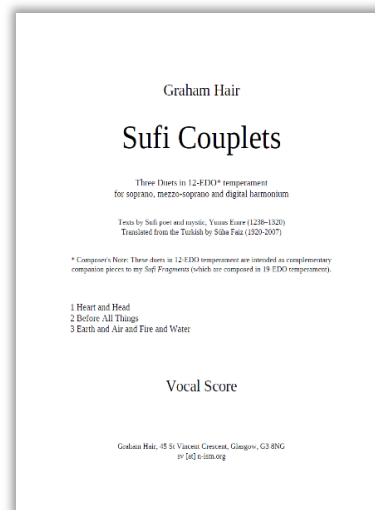


Photo 2. Sufi Couplets

Graham Hair is a renowned composer known for his innovative synthesis of Eastern and Western musical traditions. His work, *Sufi Couplets*, exemplifies the integration of spiritual themes with modern compositional techniques.

Aim of the Research

This study aims to analyse, from the perspectives of musical semiotics and hermeneutics, how the musical structure of *Sufi Couplets* reflects the shared thematic thoughts of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and Yunus Emre. This analysis will be conducted across the following three dimensions:

First Dimension: Unity and Universal Connection (Wahdat al-Wujud)

Rumi's philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wujud* is based on the belief that all beings are manifestations of God and rests upon the notion of the unity of ultimate reality (Chittick, 1983). In Hair's work, this concept is musically expressed through the continuous and steady drone sound of the harmonium, representing God's timeless and unchanging existence. This section will provide a detailed examination of how the concept of unity is concretised through musical language, focusing on the uninterrupted sound of the harmonium and the integration of the vocals into this structure.

Second Dimension: The Transformative Power of Divine Love

According to Rumi, love is a powerful transformative tool that enables the individual to break away from worldly attachments and ascend towards God. Yunus Emre, on the other hand, depicted divine love in simpler terms, describing it as the longing and closeness a person feels towards God (Barks, 1995). In Hair's composition, this transformative effect of love is reflected through wide intervallic leaps in the vocal melodies, dramatic rises and falls, and points of resolution. This section will analyse how the melodic lines in duets such as "Heart and Mind" and "Earth, Air, Fire, and Water" express the enthusiasm, yearning, and tranquillity of love.

Third Dimension: Inner Journey and Meditation

In the thoughts of Rumi and Yunus Emre, it is emphasised that a person must embark on an inner journey, disciplining the self and freeing oneself from worldly desires to reach God. Rumi defines this journey as "realising the divine potential inherent within oneself," while Yunus Emre expresses it as the necessity of "knowing oneself" and "finding the Truth" (Schimmel, 2001). In *Sufi Couplets*, Hair underscores the meditative dimension of the inner journey that fosters depth and focus, highlighted through the rhythmic structure of the work and the continuity of the harmonium. This section will examine how rhythmic repetitions, and the constant drone sound invite the listener on an inner journey and provide a transcendental experience.

Analyses conducted within the framework of these three main dimensions will reveal how the musical structure of *Sufi Couplets* is connected with the mystical thoughts of Mevlana and Yunus Emre, and how the work meaningfully expresses Sufi themes through music.

Method

This study is structured within a framework of musical semiotics and hermeneutics to examine how Graham Hair's work *Sufi Couplets* reflects the Sufi thoughts of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and Yunus Emre. The methodological approaches focus on analysing how the main themes in Rumi's philosophy—unity, divine love, and inner journey—are musically represented and how Hair conveys these themes to listeners through his music.

Research Design

This study is a qualitative study that seeks to identify the musical and semantic aspects of Sufi Couplets based on three major categories. The detailed review is to understand how Rumi's Sufism teachings of *Wahdat al-Wujud* (Unity), *divine love* and *the inner journey* is an important aspect of Hair's music from musical and symbolic analysis. In this regard, a hermeneutic analysis with the purpose of understanding the connection between symbols and sounds has been used and a semiotic approach has been taken in order to understand the meaning of music.

Data Collection and Analysis Process

Musical Analysis

Within the scope of the study, musical elements such as sound, melody, rhythm, and harmony used in Hair's *Sufi Couplets* have been analysed in detail. This analysis was conducted to understand how relationships between the work's tonality, mode, and rhythmic structures are established. Hair's aim to create a balance between Eastern and Western music by using a 12-tone equal temperament (12-EDO) structure in this piece has a significant impact on his musical choices. Structural elements such as the use of drones (continuous steady sounds) and the preference for consonant structures at certain intervals have been examined as musical reflections of the continuous unity symbolised by Rumi's concept of *Wahdat al-Wujud*.

Semiotic Examination

This study has been conducted within the framework of musical semiotics to examine the symbolic and semantic layers in Hair's work. Musical signs have been evaluated in line with Charles S. Peirce's concepts of icon, index, and symbol, and the analysis has focused on how the harmony, drone, and rhythmic structures in the work are in meaningful relation with Rumi's Sufi philosophy. The semiotic examination explains how the symbols used in the process of conveying Mevlana's philosophy to the listener through music create meaning. In this context, details have been provided on how philosophical concepts are represented with certain musical elements, such as the drone sound symbolising God's unchanging existence.

Hermeneutic Approach

The hermeneutic analysis used in the study conducts a conceptual examination of Hair's compositional language to explore the thematic and symbolic meanings contained in the work. The three main themes of the piece—unity, divine love, and inner journey—have been interpreted in relation to both Mevlana and Yunus Emre's Sufi philosophy and the musical structure. In this context, the hermeneutic analysis facilitates addressing the work within a thematic framework that refers to Mevlana and Yunus Emre's mystical teachings.

Graham Hair's compositional language is characterised by an interdisciplinary approach that incorporates innovative musical aesthetics developed in the second half of the 20th century. In his compositions, Hair often establishes unique transitions between tonal and modal structures, offering the listener a sound that is both familiar and innovative. In this respect, he uses both traditional melodic and harmonic elements and transforms sound materials through new techniques and technologies. In many of his works, Hair operates with a high degree of structural precision, also employing mathematical and geometric modelling in the composition process; this ensures meticulous balance in the timing and sound organisation in his works.

An emphasis on sound density and a tendency to form sound clusters in specific frequency regions are among the characteristic features of Hair's works. This approach, which makes transitions between timbres fluid while maintaining structural harmony in the sound organisation, combines harmonic freedom in contemporary music with the musical roots of the past. Particularly, the polyphonic and polyrhythmic structures observed in his choral works indicate that

Hair has developed a compositional language that integrates traditional Western music with the modernistic sound explorations of the 20th century.

Another important aspect to consider when examining Hair's music is his interest in interdisciplinary research and different cultural music. This diversity allows the composer to create a rich musical language in which he develops new forms of expression by utilising cross-cultural interactions. These features make the examination of Hair's music valuable both in terms of analytical music theory and within the context of contemporary compositional practices.

Consisting of three duets composed by drawing inspiration from the verses of Turkish mystic and poet Yunus Emre (1238–1320), Graham Hair's work *Sufi Couplets* is designed in a 12-tone equal temperament (12-EDO) structure for soprano, mezzo-soprano, and digital harmonium.

In this work, Hair incorporates the conventional tonality with the advanced harmonic language thus providing the audience a music that is classical yet contemporary. The vocal sections in the piece have melodic lines which make the implementation of the texts of Yunus Emre quite mystical and deep. The digital harmonium that is used in the work also gives the work a traditional and a modern touch.

In Hair's compositional language, his interest in microtonal structures and different tuning systems is particularly noteworthy. In *Sufi Couplets*, by using the 12-EDO system, he brings together traditional Western music with the mystical elements of the East. This approach reflects Hair's interest in interdisciplinary and cross-cultural interactions.

When examining the structural analysis of the work, it is evident that Hair meticulously balances melodic and harmonic structures, creating polyphonic and polyrhythmic textures between the vocal parts.

Analysis

Analysis of the First Dimension: Unity and Universal Connection (*Wahdat al-Wujud*)

Unity and Universal Connection (*Wahdat al-Wujud*)

The philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wujud* (the Unity of Being) is based on the belief that all beings are reflections of God and holds a central place in Rumi's philosophy (Chittick, 1983). In Graham Hair's *Sufi Couplets*, the fundamental musical element reflecting this theme of unity is the harmonium's continuous drone sound. In the piece, the harmonium is metaphorically designed to symbolise unity and God's unchanging existence by providing a foundation upon which both vocal lines are built.

Use of the Harmonium Drone

The harmonium's drone sound continues uninterrupted in every measure of the work and remains, especially in the first section, within strong harmonic intervals considered consonant in Western music, such as the perfect fifths of A–E, F#–C#, and E–B. This sound persists throughout the piece, creating a continuous structure that represents "unity." In this structure, particularly in the duet "Heart and Head," the harmonium's drone remains fixed in unison with the soprano or mezzo-soprano that represents the theme within the tonal flow, supported by harmonic consonances based on thirds and fifths of the vocal lines. This choice reinforces a sense of universal unity through intervals deemed secure in Western music. In this context, the harmony between the vocal lines and the harmonium represents God's unchangeability and the unity of existence.



Figure 1. Use of Harmonium Drone Tonal Axis in Sufi Couplets

The harmonium's continuous drone represents the unity of being, a central concept in Rumi's philosophy. This unchanging tonal foundation underscores the divine presence throughout the piece.

Vocal Harmony and the Theme of Unity

The alignment of the vocal lines with the harmonium drone provides a structure allowing both vocals to move together yet independently. In the duet "Heart and Head," it is noteworthy that the soprano and mezzo-soprano lines often converge at intervals of thirds, fifths, and sixths. Selecting these intervals enables the vocals to support each other while possessing unique lines, forming a structure that represents unity. Specifically, in measure 10, there are parallel movements based on intervals of thirds and fifths, and the repetition of these figures six times gives the listener a sense of wholeness. Moreover, to create a similar perception of unity, Harmonium One and Harmonium Two employ similar figures containing different intervals rhythmically from the beginning of the piece. Here, it can be said that the theme of unity is not only in the dichotomy of the two registers (outer voices) but also in their complementary nature as a whole.



Figure 2. Emphasis on Uniqueness and Unity in Soprano and Mezzo-Soprano Parts in the Duet "Heart and Head" in Sufi Couplets

In the duet "Heart and Head," the interplay of the soprano and mezzo-soprano parts symbolises unity. Their converging harmonic intervals create a sense of spiritual cohesion within the composition.

Analysis of the Second Dimension: The Transformative Power of Divine Love

The Transformative Power of Divine Love

According to Rumi, divine love is a transformative process that enables an individual to free themselves from worldly attachments and ascend towards God (Lewis, 2000). In *Sufi Couplets*, this transformation is expressed through wide intervallic leaps in melodic lines, sudden changes, and tonal consonant intervals.

Representation of Transformation in Melodic Intervals

Hair musically articulates the essence of transformation by preferring wide melodic intervals between the soprano and mezzo-soprano, especially in the duet "Earth, Air, Fire, and Water," to emphasise the ascending and transformative effect of divine love. In this duet, the mezzo-soprano line features sixth and fifth intervals in measures 2 and 3, respectively. With these intervals, the composer musically conveys the human longing for God and the uplifting effect of divine love. Following each of these wide intervals, a sense of arrival and harmony is often created with thirds and fourths—considered secure intervals in traditional tonality—between both lines. Subsequently, this harmony employs a fourth interval, musically expressing the completion of love's transformative process and the attainment of tranquillity.



Figure 3. Representation of melodic transformation in soprano and mezzo-soprano parts in the duet "Earth, Air, Fire, and Water" in Sufi Couplets

The duet highlights the transformative power of divine love through wide melodic leaps and harmonic resolutions. These elements reflect the spiritual ascent described in Rumi's teachings.

Cadential Resolutions and Divine Tranquillity

Hair uses cadential resolutions to reflect the serenity achieved at the culmination of love. Although the absence of a specific tonal centre in atonal music prevents cadential structures from forming in traditional ways, Graham Hair's approach to cadence focuses not on a tonal centre but on metric, rhythmic, and motivic changes to create a sense of pause or "conclusion" in the listener.

In Hair's music, cadential-like points are generally achieved through the expansion, intensification, or termination of certain motifs. This is particularly evident in his works adopting a spectral approach—that is, structures based on the acoustic properties of sound, emphasising specific frequency spectra or timbres. He creates a sense of cadence not by returning to the tonic but by "settling" on a particular timbre or frequency range.

Additionally, Hair employs techniques such as rhythmic displacement or sudden changes in metric patterns to create the impression of a turning point. This produces a feeling of closure or rest in a freer structure, reminiscent of the function of traditional cadences. Hair's approach offers a creative structure that adapts the concept of cadence to an atonal and spectral framework.

The image displays a musical score for a duet titled "Heart and Head" from the work "Sufi Couplets". The score is presented in three systems, each beginning with a measure number: 22, 25, and 28. The vocal parts are for Soprano (Sop) and Mezzo-Soprano (Mezzo). The instrumental parts include Harmonium One (harmOne), Harmonium Two (harm2), and Drones. The lyrics "in that is my de - light" are written under the vocal lines. The score shows a cadential ending and rhythmic displacement, particularly in the mezzo-soprano line at measure 22.

Figure 4. Cadential ending and rhythmic displacement in the duet "Heart and Head" in Sufi Couplets

In the duet "Heart and Head," there is a noticeable slowing of rhythmic displacement in the mezzo-soprano line at measure 22. Here, it can be said that the composer begins the preparation for arrival or, metaphorically, tranquillity. This preparation can be considered the musical counterpart of the divine tranquillity that follows intense emotional accumulations. Furthermore, the composer reinforces the sense of ending that begins in measure 22 through motivic variation by restructuring in measure 28 the motif based on thirds and fifths, which emphasises unity in the soprano and mezzo-soprano lines at measure 10—rhythmically the same but melodically different. Following this, from measure 29 onwards, the composer sharpens the sense of conclusion by again slowing down the perceived rhythmic displacement and emphasising the first and third notes of the F major triadic chord in both outer voices. Thus, Hair's choices in cadential structures provide a musical expression aligning with Rumi's philosophy of viewing divine love as a source of tranquillity.

Analysis of the Third Dimension: Inner Journey and Meditation

In the thoughts of Rumi and Yunus Emre, reaching God is seen as a process of inner transformation. In *Sufi Couplets*, this theme is represented through rhythmic cycles and the stability of the harmonium drone.

Rhythmic Structure and Meditative Effect

Hair supports the theme of the inner journey through rhythmic cycles and regular repetitions. In the duet "Before All Things" (measures 1–16), a meditative structure is created by making transitions every three measures. These transitions provide the listener with a macro-level rhythmic repetition, creating a mental environment of tranquillity. Furthermore,

Harmonium One contributes to the meditative structure by continuously repeating a motif consisting of eighth notes and thirty-second notes within a 3/4 time signature, incorporating several variations without disrupting the main structure (for example, moving the initial eighth note to the end, as shown in Figure 2).

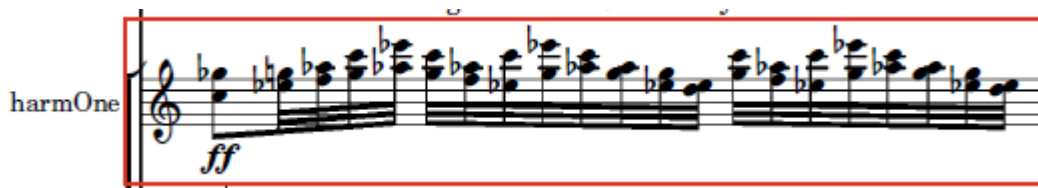


Figure 5. Repeating rhythmic phrase character in harmonium one in the duet "Before All Things" in Sufi Couplets



Figure 6. Variation of repeating rhythmic phrase character in harmonium one in the duet "Before All Things" in Sufi Couplets

Subtle rhythmic shifts in the harmonium maintain continuity while enhancing the piece's meditative quality. These variations reflect the dynamic yet stable nature of the inner journey.

Stability of the Harmonium Drone and Continuity of the Inner Journey

Another significant structure supporting the inner journey is the stability provided by the harmonium's continuous drone sound. Drones One and Two reference the tonal axis appropriately to the necessity of stable pitch orientation from the beginning to the end of the piece, varying among rhythmic cycles. For example, in the first three measures, the reference tonality is C minor. These stable tones of the drone serve to continuously establish the individual's connection with the divine while also representing God's unchangeability. The stability created by Hair strengthens the meditative effect of the piece, inviting the listener on a spiritual journey. The uninterrupted continuation of this stability for 16 measures represents the continuity of the meditation process and the inner journey.

Discussion

This study aimed to analyse how Graham Hair's work *Sufi Couplets* transforms the Sufi teachings of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and Yunus Emre into a universal narrative through Western music. By drawing upon the poems of Yunus Emre, Hair's piece brings together the Sufi themes of inner unity, divine love, and spiritual journey with the aesthetic tools of Western music. The findings of the analysis demonstrate that these three fundamental themes of Sufism can be successfully expressed through music.

Unity and Universal Connection (*Wahdat al-Wujud*)

The theme of unity created by the harmonium's continuous drone sound in the piece can be considered a powerful musical reflection of Rumi's belief in *Wahdat al-Wujud*. This concept is based on the philosophy that all beings are reflections of God and unite in the oneness of ultimate reality (Chittick, 1983). The continuous drone sound used by Hair in the harmonium forms the fundamental basis for both vocal lines of the piece and symbolises God's unchanging, timeless existence. While Schimmel (2011) and Nasr (1987) note that Rumi's philosophy emphasises the theme of the unity of all beings by offering a universal connection, Hair's musical choice embodies the unifying effect of Sufism through music.

Specifically, building the harmonic structure of *Sufi Couplets* upon traditional Western musical consonances (intervals of thirds and fifths) facilitates the creation of a universal sense of unity (Lewis, 2000). The use of these consonant intervals forms a bridge between Eastern and Western musical traditions, emphasising the cross-cultural validity of the philosophy of *Wahdat al-Wujud*. As researchers like Sells (1996) and Keshavarz (1998) have noted, Rumi's

philosophy is based on the unity of all beings. The musical expression of this theme through Hair's work brings the universal nature of Sufism to Western music audiences.

The Transformative Power of Divine Love

Hair's work expresses Rumi and Yunus Emre's belief in the transformative power of divine love through wide melodic leaps and dramatic resolutions. In Rumi's philosophy, divine love is considered the most important means by which an individual breaks away from worldly attachments and reaches God (Lewis, 2000). The melodic structure in Hair's piece, filled with wide intervals and fluctuations, reflects the liberating and elevating effect of love on the human soul. Specifically, in the duet "Earth, Air, Fire, and Water," wide intervallic leaps and cadential resolutions express the transformative power of love and the peace attained at its culmination. Ernst (1997) and Barks (1995) emphasise that Rumi portrays divine love as a figure that brings about profound change in the individual's soul; Hair's musical narration powerfully reflects this transformation process.

By focusing on rhythmic and motivic changes in his cadential structures to create pauses, Hair departs from traditional Western cadences, presenting an original structure that reflects the tranquillity achieved at the end of divine love. This approach supports Ernst's (1997) assertion that "In Rumi's philosophy, love is the fundamental basis of the process of reaching God." Thus, Hair has been able to express Rumi's concept of divine love as a source of peace by pushing the boundaries of Western music.

Inner Journey and Meditation

Hair's rhythmic cycles and the continuity of the harmonium drone represent, through music, the inner journey deemed necessary to reach God in the works of Rumi and Yunus Emre. In Sufi teachings, this inner journey involves the process of self-discovery and reaching God by shedding worldly desires (Schimmel, 2001). By using rhythmic cycles and a continuous drone, Hair creates a meditative effect on the listener, thereby inviting them on a spiritual journey. Chittick (2000) and Keshavarz (1998) state that Sufism is a teaching that emphasises the individual's inner transformation; the fixed drone and rhythmic structures in Hair's work musically express this transformation.

Hair's concretisation of this inner journey theme in musical language aligns with Rumi's thought that "Reaching God is possible through finding oneself" (Sells, 1996). In this context, the meditative rhythmic structures and the fixed drone used in the piece offer the listener the opportunity to experience Rumi and Yunus Emre's concept of the inner journey, transforming this concept into a universal narrative.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Graham Hair's work *Sufi Couplets* presents an impressive example of how the Sufi thoughts of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and Yunus Emre can be reinterpreted within the framework of Western music. By combining Western and Eastern musical traditions in his music, Hair has transformed fundamental Sufi themes such as divine love, unity, and inner journey into a universal narrative (Ernst, 1997). This study offers new perspectives on cross-cultural music research and the artistic reflections of Sufi themes, while also posing important questions about music's capacity to create meaning.

This research demonstrates how Sufi thoughts can be represented within the aesthetics of Western music and contributes to cross-cultural music studies. Future research could examine how different composers have approached Sufi themes and how these themes have influenced cultural interactions (Chittick, 2000). Additionally, studies that experimentally investigate the psychological and emotional effects of Sufi music on listeners could further contribute to this field. While Schimmel (2011) and Sells (1996) argue that expressing Sufi thought through music leaves a profound spiritual impact on the listener, such studies could more intricately examine the effects of Sufi musical representations on audiences.

Limitations of the Study

This study provides an important framework for how Sufi themes can be expressed in a universal language through music. The musical techniques used in Hair's work facilitate the blending of Rumi and Yunus Emre's mystical teachings with Western music, transcending cultural boundaries. Hair's ability to express Sufi themes with musical symbols offers

a new layer of meaning for Western music listeners and places a strong emphasis on the universality of Sufism (Nasr, 1987). However, this study has limitations. The analysis focuses solely on the work *Sufi Couplets* and does not examine how Sufi themes are treated in the works of other composers. Additionally, due to the analytical methods containing subjective interpretations, it becomes challenging to generalise the findings to a broader musical context (Lewis, 2000).

Disclosure

This study was conducted meticulously adhering to scientific research ethics and principles of academic integrity. In this analysis, which examines the relationship of Graham Hair's *Sufi Couplets* with the mystical philosophies of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi and Yunus Emre, respect was shown to the philosophical depth of the mentioned thoughts and cultural values. All stages of the research were carried out independently, and no external funding or institutional support was provided for the execution of the study. Ethical standards were fully observed by carefully respecting the copyright and confidentiality rights of third parties.

Biodata od Author



Asst. Prof. Dr., **Firat Altun**, was born in Diyarbakır, Türkiye, and began his formal musical education at the Diyarbakır Anatolian Fine Arts High School, where he cultivated his foundational skills in music. His academic journey continued with a Bachelor's degree in Music Education, during which he engaged deeply with the polyphonic traditions of Turkish music, advanced his technical and performance skills on the cello, and developed a rigorous understanding of choral conducting and aural skills. After completing his undergraduate studies, Firat Altun furthered his academic pursuits with a Master's degree in Music Education. His scholarly path then led him to the University of York at the United Kingdom, where he was awarded a competitive scholarship to undertake doctoral research at a leading institution in Music. His doctoral studies encompassed interdisciplinary research in music cognition and affective response, advanced compositional techniques, and ear training. In addition to his academic endeavors, he actively contributed as a cellist to various performances with symphony and chamber orchestras. Firat Altun's research interests lie at the intersection of music perception and cognition, composition, and performance, with a particular focus on the cognitive and cultural dynamics of musical structure. His work contributes to a deeper understanding of how music is perceived, composed, and performed across different cultural contexts.

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Research Article

An examination of the trends in thesis research focused on “Mevlana’s Philosophy and Art” in Turkiye

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Abstract

Turkiye is the place where Mevlana’s philosophy was born and flourished. The influence of this philosophy is seen not only in the East but also in the West and around the world. The research problem in this study is to determine the trend of theses written on Mevlana’s philosophy and art axis in Turkiye higher education. In this context, I identified the graduate theses related to Mevlana and art that have been conducted in Turkiye since 2002. A total of 22 theses were identified, and they were analyzed in terms of discipline area, university type, thesis type, years of completion, keywords, and thesis topics. The results showed that the majority of the theses were in the field of art history, followed by music, and the third category was bookbinding. Most of these theses (18) were done at state universities, while 4 were at private universities. Seven of these theses were conducted in Konya, the city where the Mevlana Museum is located. The majority of the theses were master’s theses (18), with only 4 being doctoral theses. The year with the highest number of theses was 2019. While no definite reason can be identified, the popularity of Turkish historical TV series, especially in the last 10-15 years, which generated high income, might be a contributing factor. The keywords in the theses are mostly from the music discipline. Two of these theses are related to fashion, either directly or indirectly. Upon examining these theses, it is noteworthy that only two of them presented original works with their own style and design after describing the existing scientific research.

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Introduction

Mevlana, although appearing as a mystical figure, is an important personality whose philosophy has influenced many fields regardless of time, as discussed in the works of one of the world’s most respected Orientalists, Annemarie Schimmel (Schimmel, 1975; Schimmel, 1996). While tracing Mevlana’s philosophy, Schimmel has also thoroughly understood its impact on various domains.



Photo 1. Annemarie Schimmel; Orientalist famous for her studies on Mevlana’s philosophy, 1922-2003 (Web 1)

It is certain that art, as a human product, serves as a mirror to the development of human humanity, and, in this sense, is also a symbol of the power of civilizations. With the depth of human aspects in Mevlana's philosophy, even in the newest forms of art fields, such as the plastic arts (Bal, 2007), and works like Menakıb Al Arifin (Yazıcı, 1972), traces of this philosophy can be observed.

The study of Mevlana's philosophy by scientific research institutions could facilitate the transfer of knowledge and practices to the intellectual elite of society. From this perspective, the research behavior dynamics of these scientific research institutions and the positioning of new researchers based on the emerging research trends can be observed. In my research, let's examine the institutions conducting scientific studies on Mevlana.

Selçuk University Rumi Studies Institute (Web 1): This institution is located within Selçuk University and was established in 2005. It conducts scientific research on Mevlana. It is noted that this institution started publishing an academic journal called *The Journal of Rumi Studies* in 2007. However, it is quite unfortunate that this journal is no longer continuing. Additionally, the institution organizes scientific congresses and symposiums on Mevlana research. The institute also offers a master's program.

Dokuz Eylül University Mevlana Application and Research Center (Web 2): This institution is part of Dokuz Eylül University and was established in 2015. It is managed by scholars in the fields of fine arts and theology.

Graduate and doctoral research related to Mevlana is carried out in various faculties of universities. These theses can be accessed openly from the National Thesis Database (Web 3) in Türkiye. Academic research on Mevlana is also conducted in academic journals in Türkiye. However, this study aims to determine the trends in graduate theses, which are significant publications for academic promotion. The reason for this is to identify the general trends in how scholars reflect Mevlana's philosophy on artistic practices.

Method

In this research, the document analysis technique, a type of qualitative research, was used. Accordingly, graduate theses prepared in Turkey after the year 2000 were identified as the data for the study. The theses were selected by searching the relevant thesis portal using the keyword "Mevlana" (326 results found), and only the theses in the field of art were included in the scope of the study. These theses were numbered, and they were analyzed in terms of their subject, keywords, and art fields and reported. A total of 22 graduate theses within this scope were identified (See Appendix 1).

Results

The number of graduate theses on Mevlana's philosophy and art over the last 23 years, totaling 22, is relatively low considering the number of universities in Turkey. I have now analyzed these graduate theses based on the identified themes.

Disciplinary Field

It was determined that some of the graduate theses on Mevlana's philosophy and art are not limited to a single disciplinary field or subject but instead involve multiple subjects. These fields include Art History (11), Music (8), Binding Craft (5), Clothing Industry (2), Gastronomy and Culinary Arts (2), Fine Arts (2), Philosophy (1), and Architecture (1). It can be observed that, after Art History, the most frequently studied subject is Music, followed by Craft.

University Type

In Türkiye, the higher education system consists of two types of universities: public and private (foundation) universities. The theses were prepared at 18 public universities and 4 private universities. These include: Necmettin Erbakan University (3), Selçuk University (3), Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University (3), Dokuz Eylül University (2), Ankara University (1), Istanbul Ayyansaray University (1), Başkent University (1), Düzce University (1), Erciyes University (1), Gazi University (1), İbni Haldun University (1), Konya Karatay University (1), Mimar Sinan Fine Art University (1), Sivas Cumhuriyet University (1), Suleyman Demirel University (1), Selçuk University, Necmettin Erbakan University, and Konya Karatay University are located in Konya, the city where the Mevlana Museum is situated.

Thesis Type

Among the graduate theses related to Mevlana's philosophy and art, 4 are doctoral theses, and 18 are master's theses. All the doctoral theses were conducted at public universities. The higher number of master's theses can be interpreted as a sign that this field has not been given much priority.

Theses's Years

The years in which the graduate theses on Mevlana's philosophy and art were completed are as follows: 2019 (9 theses), 2015 (2 theses), 2022 (2 theses), 2007, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2017, 2020, 2023 (1 thesis each)

The year 2019 is particularly striking.

Theses's Keywords

When analyzing the keywords in the theses; Mevlana (16), Mawlawiyya (9), House of Mevlevis (5), Mevlana Museum (3), Music Works (3), Turkish mysticism music (4), Art (2), Artisans (3), Book cover (2), Classical Turkish music (1), Mevlevi ceremony (2), Music (2), Music culture (2), Mystic (2), Ottoman Period (2), Tercüme-i Sevakıb-ı Menakıb (2), Mevlevi ceremony (2) are listed, along with other words (1 time each); 15th Century, 16th Century, Afyonkarahisar, Art activities, Art trends, Beautiful, Beverages, Book binding, Cardigan, Ceiling painting, Chishtiyya, Classical Turkish music, Clothing, Clothing pattern, Composers, Compositions, Çanakkale-Gelibolu, Dishes, Food culture, Gastrostomy, Handicrafts, Health, Human, Illumination art, India, İsmail Dede Efendi Hammamizade, Kitchen, Konya, Literature of mysticism, Manuscripts, Mathnawi, Menagip, Menakıbu'l Arifin, Metaphor, Mevlevi clothes, Miniature, Museology, Museums, Music descriptions, Music education, Musical instruments, Mystical elements, Mystical life, Neva mode, Orientalism, Ottoman State, Painters, Painting art, Philosophy, Philosophy of mysticism, Prosody poet, Psychology, Qawwali, Rauf Yekta Bey, Rebab, Religious music, Religious orders, Rhythm, Sherbet, Sirkencübin, Tambstones, Tercüme-i Menakıb-ı Mevlana, Tombs, Truth, Turkish illumination art, Wall paintings.

When carefully examined, it is seen that 26 keywords are related to the field of music. Therefore, in terms of keywords, it can be observed that the theses related to Mevlana philosophy and art focus most on the field of music.

Thesis Topics

Aktaş (2007) examined the garments created with the influence of the Mevlana philosophy of the time, which are found in the Mevlana Museum, and made their classification and analysis.



Photo 1. Front and back view of the entari garment at the Mevlana Museum (Aktaş, 2007:104)

Budak (2009), examined the binding and covers of 56 books from the Mevlana period found in the Mevlana Complex, focusing on the materials used, as well as the solar-Sertap-miktep, scale-border-in-zencirek techniques, the materials, and the decoration style.

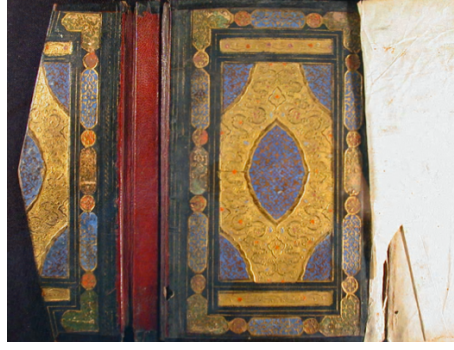


Photo 2. Interior back cover decorations of the Divan-ı Kebir book, a work of Mevlana (Budak, 2009: 215)

Taşel (2011), examined the wall and ceiling paintings in the Mevlana Museum, focusing on the decoration techniques, patterns, and composition features.



Photo 3. Ceiling and wall paintings found in the Mevlana Museum (Taşel, 2011: 50)

İrden (2012), made a musical analysis of the hymns composed by Dede Efendi in Mevlevi music based on his own developed makam and form analysis.

DEDE EFENDİ FERAHFEZA AYINI 4 SELAM 4A BÖLÜMÜ; BEYİT, MISRA, VEZİN, MAKAM, GEÇKİ, ÇEŞNİ KULLANIMI							
1.ölçü	2.ölçü	3.ölçü	4.ölçü	5.ölçü	6.ölçü	7.ölçü	8.ölçü
4A1	4A2	4A3	4A4	4A5	4A6	4A7-4A3	4A8-4A4
4 selâmın 1. beyitinin 1. mısrasını /vezin/ Medîlü medîlîlün fîcîlün Sultân-ı menî sultân-ı menî				4 selâmın 1. beyitinin 2. mısrasını /vezin/ Medîlü medîlîlün fîcîlün Ender dil ü can imân-ı menî			
Ah Sultâ	n-ı menî	tî sultâ	n-ı menî	Ah Ender	dil ü can	can imâ	n-ı menî
Sultânî Yegâh makam seyri girilip nevâ perdesinde büselik çeşni ile asma kalı yapılmış				nevâ perdesinde büselik makamı dîzî kullanılıp asma kalı yapılarak bölüm sonlandırılmış			
SULTANİ YEGAH MAKAMI							

Photo 4. An example of the musical analysis made by İrden (2012: 315) based on his own developed form analysis of Dede Efendi's hymns.

Haral (2014), examined the miniatures (small paintings) found in books influenced by Mevlana's philosophy (Menâkıbü'l-ârifin and Tercüme-i Sevâkıb-ı Menâkıb) from an iconographic perspective.



Katalog No : 6, Resim 11
 Bulunduğu Yer : *Tercüme-i Sevâkıb-ı Menâkıb* [NPM, M. 466, 29a]
 Minyatürün Ölçüsü : 157 x 120 mm.
 Yüzyıl / Tarih : y. 1590
 Nakkaş : Nakkaş A
 Minyatürün Konusu : Mevlânâ'nın Neyzen Hamza'ya diriltiine kerameti

Metindeki Menâkıbe [*Tercüme-i Sevâkıb-ı Menâkıb*, R. 1479, 88a-88b]

Mevlânâ'nın yumuşak dilliyen Neyzen Hamza dedikleri bir dervişi vardır. Vefât eder. Mevlânâ, kefenlenmesi hüncine kendisine haber verilmesini ister. Gassal tahta üzerine götürönce, Mevlânâ'ya işaret olmur. O da gelir: Mübarek eyleye (Neyzen Hamza'nın) kulağına yapışıp şöyle der: "Ey aziz Neyzen Hamza, kalk, seninde için var". Hamza hayat bulup kalkar. Ney üfler. Mevlânâ üç gün üç gece sema ve safa eyler. O anda nice kâfirler Müslüman olurlar. Mevlânâ semayı bitirip dışarı çıktığında Neyzen Hamza'nın da ruhu çıkar. Mevlânâ'ya haber verirler. O da "Hakkın emri hayâle. Emir yerini buldu. Defnedin" der. Ne kadar malik bir sühanmış insaf etmek gerekir.

Minyatürün Tanımı

Dikine düzenlenmiş kompozisyonda mekân, duvarla tabiattan ayrılan bir avludur. Doğuya açılan sivri kemerli bir pencere ve onun iki tarafına yerleştirilen nişler, minyatürdeki başlıca mimari unsurlardır. Ortada kaburengi masa üzerinde kefenlenmiş ince uzun bir ceset yer alır. Beyaz kâfesi, ayak bükükleri, bel ve tıgne olmak üzere üç ayrı bölüme ayrılmıştır. Keflenmiş bu kişi Mevlânâ'nın diriltiği, Mevlâ'î derviş Neyzen Hamza'dır. Neyzenin başını kendisine doğru kaldıran komşusu ise Mevlânâ'dır. Siyah sakallı ve oldukça soner betimlenmiştir. Sol

Photo 5. An iconographic analysis of one of the miniatures in the book *Tercüme-i Sevâkıb-ı Menâkıb* in Haral's (2014: 81-82) study

Tuna (2015), examined 9 *Mesnevi* books found in the Mevlana Museum in terms of their binding, paper characteristics, writing dimensions, and decorations.

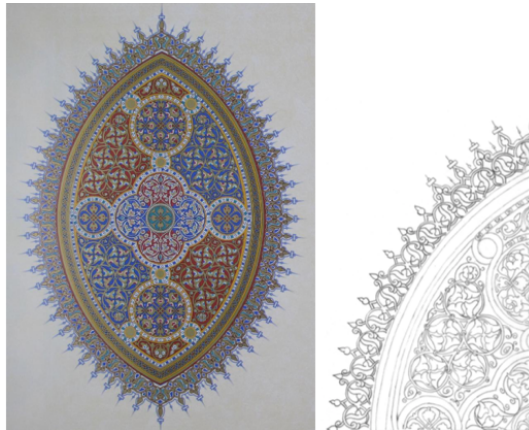


Photo 6. In Tuna's (2015: 47) study, the examination of the illumination (decoration) in the *Mesnevi* books

Duran (2016), classified the miniatures in two books written under the influence of Mevlana philosophy (*Menâkıbü'l-ârifîn* and *Tercüme-i Sevâkıb-ı Menâkıb*) and created new miniature designs.



Photo 7. In Duran's (2016) study, an example of a miniature from *Tercüme-i Sevâkıb-ı Menâkıb* (on the left, p.10) and an example of a miniature designed by the researcher (on the right, p.138).

Kara (2016), examined the binding features of 149 books found in the Mevlana Museum according to the art of bookbinding.



Photo 8. The covers of the Mesnevi books featured in Kara's (2016: 622) study

Akın-Urkmez (2017), examined the tombstones and inscriptions found in the Mevlevi Complex in Afyonkarahisar in terms of their transcription and decoration.



Photo 9. An example from Akın-Urkmez's (2017: Appendix, p. 51) study on the transcription and decoration analysis of the tombstones and inscriptions found in the Mevlana Complex in Afyonkarahisar

Sutekin (2019), examined the impressions gained by 30 Western artists and travelers who were influenced by Mevlana's philosophy and observed the music and rituals created as a result. This study describes the impressions of people from different cultures regarding Mevlana's philosophy and the art that emerged.

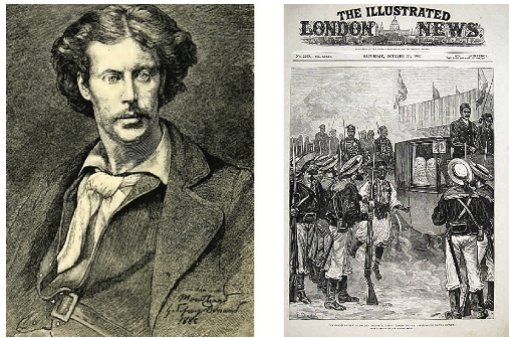


Photo 10. A person, George Montbard, from Sutekin's (2019: 86) study on individuals influenced by Mevlana's philosophy

Hidayetoğlu (2019), examined the artists who were influenced by Mevlana's philosophy and trained in the 17th-19th centuries.



Photo 11. Hidayetoğlu's (2019: 148) study on artists influenced by Mevlana's philosophy in the 17th-19th centuries: The painting "Neyzen" by İbrahim Çelli

Kunduroğlu-Erat (2019), examined 8 hymns composed by Zeki Atkoşar, one of the composers influenced by Mevlana's philosophy and the Mevlevi music, analyzing the relationship between the rhythms used and the meters of the lyrics written in the Aruz form.

MÜF TE İ LÜN FÄ İ LÜN MÜF TE İ LÜN FÄ İ LÜN
 ey ki he zür ä fe rün bu ni ce sul ün o lur
 ku lu o lan ki si ler hü re vü hî kan o lur
 her ki bu gün ve le de i nî mü ben yüz sü re
 yok sul vî se bay o lur bay i se sul tan o lur

ME FÄ İ LÜN ME FÄ İ LÜN FA İ LÜN
 cîn an mes cem cîn ün mes tem men im rûz (serenâm)
 ki pi rû se re mi dâ rem zi pi rûz (serenâm)

Photo 12. Musical analysis examples of the compositions by Zeki Atkoşar, a composer of Mevlevi music, in Kunduroğlu-Erat's (2019: 59) study

Gevaş (2019), compared Mevlevi music with the Kavvali music (Indian) genre.

Mevlevî (Semâ') Âşını	Kavvâlî (Mahfil-e Semâ')
Semâ' Kur'an-ı Kerim okunmasıyla başlanmaktadır.	Zikir Kur'an-ı Kerim okunmasıyla başlanmaktadır.
Zikrullâha tövbe-i istîğâr ile başlanır. Farklı birkaç istîğâr da eklenir. Daha sonra bir miktar besmele-i şerif okunur. Bir miktar Esmâ'l-hüsnâ (Allah'ın en güzel isimleri) okunur. Sonrasında "Salavât-ı şerîfe" okunur. Salavât-ı şerîfe'den sonra üç defa "Kelime-i tevhîd" dört elif miktarı uzatılıp okunur (Özbağ, 2010, s. 6-11)	Çiştîler zikirlerinde şehâdet kelimesine yoğunlaşıp 'İlallah' sözüne vurgu yaparak zikrederler (El- Hafni, 2006, s. 149).
Mevlevî Tarikatının en mühim tarafı "semâ" ve çile" dir (Öztuna, 1989, s. 254)	Sesli ve gizli zikir, içsel muhasebe, semâ' ve çile Çiştî Tarikatının başlıca usul ve kaidelerindendir (Nizami, 1993, s. 345)
Tarikata ait giysiler bulunmaktadır.	Yün giymek esas olmak kaydıyla kendine has bir başlıkları bulunur.
Mevlevî Tarikatında Mesnevinin birçok yerinde tövbe, oruç, riyazet, kanaat gibi hususlar anlatılırken bazı kötü alışkanlıklardan çekimne tavsiye edilir. Ayrıca Mevlânâ, oruç ile ilgili şu ifadeleri yer verir: "Oruç tutarak kötü huylardan gereği gibi temizlenirse, emmiş kişilerin peşine düşer, göklere yükselirsin,	Tarikata girmek isteyen mürit iki rekât namaz kılar ve "tövbe alır". Müride riyazet, kanaat ve fakr kelimeleri telkin edilir. Kırk gün oruç tutma, içki, sigara

Photo 13. Gevaş's (2019: 109) study on the comparison of Mevlevi and Kavvali rituals

Pişkin (2019), examined the musicians who worked on Mevlevi music at the Gallipoli Mevlevihane, focusing on their compositions, the calligraphy in the building, and the paintings drawn.



Photo 14. Pişkin's (2019) study on the musicians trained at Gallipoli Mevlevihane (from left to right); Neyzen Aziz Dede (p. 116), Hüseyin Fahreddin Dede (p. 118), Ahmet Celaledin Dede (p. 120), Neyzen Mehmed Emin Yazıcı Dede (p. 122).

Tuncer (2019), in his study in the field of philosophy of art, examined the symbols related to art in the *Mesnevi* from a philosophical perspective.

Can (2019), re-composed two musical works from a manuscript (No. 1907) written with Mevlana's philosophy, according to the stylistic features of the period.

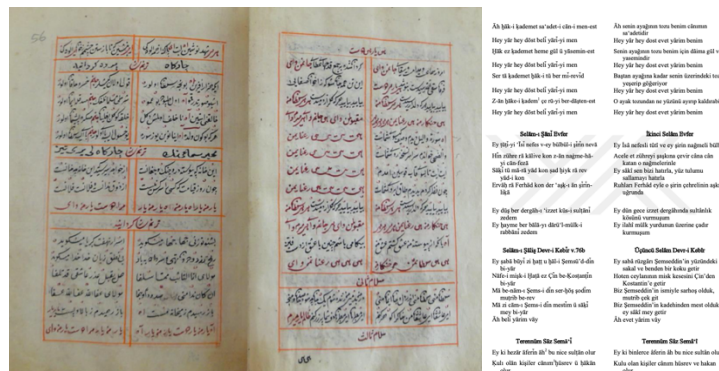


Photo 15. Can's (2019) page from the manuscript No. 1907 (p. 261) and the translation (p. 218) with the work of re-composing the musical piece

Bahadır (2020), examined the metaphors of the rebab, a musical instrument used in Mevlevi rituals, in Mevlana's works from the perspective of music philosophy.

Orhan (2020), conducted a study on Oxymel or Sirkencübin (a mixture of honey, vinegar, and water), a beverage shaped by Mevlana's philosophy.

Tai'ai (2019), studied manuscripts related to the kitchens in Mevlevi lodges (16th-17th centuries) shaped by Mevlana's philosophy, from the perspective of gastronomy and culinary arts.



Photo 16. A miniature from one of the manuscripts studied by Tai'ai (2019: 90) on Mevlevi kitchens and meals

Orakçioğlu (2022), examined the miniatures in rituals (Sema ceremony) shaped by Mevlana's philosophy and the musical instruments used by musicians of the time, both from the perspective of fashion and organology.



Photo 17. Example of Orakçioğlu's (2022: 71) fashion and organological analysis through miniatures

Akpak (2022), analyzed the concepts related to Mevlana in his own books from a music philosophy perspective.

Kaya (2023), conducted a study on the psychological impact of visitors to the Mevlana Museum (located in Konya), and offered suggestions based on findings related to the design of the building.

Conclusion

In this study, which analyzes the reflection of the impact of Mevlana's philosophy on art in thesis works in Turkish universities and the resulting trends, 22 graduate theses have been identified. Most of these studies are in the field of art history, followed by music, and thirdly, book binding. The majority of the theses (18) were carried out at state universities, with 4 at private universities. Seven of these theses are from the city of Konya, where the Mevlana Museum is located. Most of the theses are master's theses (18), with only 4 being doctoral theses. The year when the most theses were conducted is 2019. While no exact reason can be determined, news about the high revenue from Turkish series, particularly historical ones, in the last 10-15 years may explain this trend. Turkey's position as the third-largest exporter of TV series is quite significant (Serbestiye, February 2024). The majority of the keywords in these theses are related to the music discipline. Two of the theses are indirectly related to fashion, which is important for potential future globally successful projects and works in this field.

A notable point when examining these theses is the work of Duran (2016) and Can (2019), who, after describing the existing scientific research, created new and original products with their own style and designs. These studies are important for taking Mevlana and art research beyond just historical research of the period. Similarly, Kaya's (2023) work in music is also significant. Orakçioğlu (2022) and Aktaş (2007) worked on fashion and design, which can serve as important resources for areas such as cinema and TV industries. Moreover, the value of other studies can be enhanced by incorporating artificial intelligence-based research and technology, which could lead to an increase in these types of studies.

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Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=MqAQWXsAAAAJ&hl=tr>

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/HTORTOP>

ResearchGate: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Hasan-Tortop-2>

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Web sites

Web 1 <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/schimmel-annemarie>

Web 2. https://www.selcuk.edu.tr/Birim/enstituler/mevlana_arastirma_ens/1838

Web 3. <https://deumam.deu.edu.tr/>

Appendix 1. Graduate theses included in the research scope**No Thesis information**

- T1** Aktaş, A. (2007). The study of the clothes of mevlevi and the clothes ascribed to Mevlana in Mevlana Museum in aspect of the branch of garment art. Master thesis. Selcuk University, Konya, Türkiye.
- T2** Budak, A. (2009). Konya Mevlana Museum İhtisas Library of XV-XVI. century book covers. Master thesis. Erciyes University, Kayseri, Türkiye.
- T3** Taşel, Z. (2011). To examine wall and ceiling figures at Museum of Mevlana Celaleddin-i Rumi in Konya. Master Thesis. Gazi University, Ankara, Türkiye.
- T4** İrden, S. (2012). The effects of modal and form concept of Hammâmîzâde İsmâil Dede Efendi Mevlevî Rituals on the Turkish religious music. Doctoral dissertation. Ankara University, Ankara, Türkiye.
- T5** Haral, H. (2014). The life story of Mevlânâ in Otoman miniature painting: Manâkib al-ârifîn and Tarjuma-i Thawâqib-i Manâqib copies. Doctoral dissertation. Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul, Türkiye.
- T6** Tuna, N. (2015). Illumination of Mathnawies in Mevlana Museum. Master thesis. Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Türkiye.
- T7** Duran, F. (2016). The composition layout of miniatures of Sevâkîb-ı Menâkîb and Unique Designs (TSM R.1479) and new designs. Master thesis. Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir, Türkiye.
- T8** Kara, H. (2016). Ottoman era bindings in curatorial department of Konya Mevlana Museum. Doctoral dissertatio. Selcuk University, Konya, Türkiye.
- T9** Akın-Urkmmez, S. (2017). Afyonkarahisar Mevlevi lodge and its gravestones that were transferred from its cemetery to museums. Master thesis. Dokuz Eylül University, İzmir, Türkiye.
- T10** Sutekin, A. (2019). To be involved the philosophy of Hz. Mevlana and Mevleviyeh in the artworks of western artists as a topic. Master thesis. Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Türkiye.
- T11** Hidayetoğlu, M.B. (2019). XVII - XIX century Mevlevi artists. Master thesis. Selcuk University, Konya, Türkiye.
- T12** Kunduroğlu-Erat, Z. (2019). The investigation of The Mevleves that is introduced by Zeki Atkoşar from the relationship between the us and the army and their relationship. Master thesis. Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara, Türkiye.
- T13** Gevaş, İ. (2019). In the sect of chistiyyah and Mawlaviiyah to the context of between similarities 'the examination of religious music genre of Qawwali. Master thesis. Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara, Türkiye.
- T14** Pişkin, T. (2019). The lives, works and contributions of the musicals of the Gallipoli mevlevihane. Master thesis. Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, Ankara, Türkiye.
- T15** Tuncer, Z. (2019). Art and truth in Mevlana. Master thesis. Necmetin Erbakan University, Konya, Türkiye.
- T16** Can, M. (2019). Mawlavi rituals in the 1907 numbered manuscript in the Library of Theology Faculty of İzmir Dokuz Eylül University (Text And analysis). Master thesis. Duzce University, Duzce, Türkiye.
- T17** Bahadır, B.H. (2020). A study of the rebab instrument as a metaphorical element in the context of Rumi's works. Master Thesis. Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Türkiye
- T18** Orhan, H.I. (2020). Investigation of relationship among Maulana and ancient sherbet sirkencübin (oxymel) from gastronomy and health perspectives. Master thesis. Istanbul Ayvansaray UNiversity, Istanbul, Türkiye.
- T19** Taiai, S. (2019). "Hamdım, Piştım, Yandım": The outer and inner roles of the mevlevî kitchen. Master thesis. İbn Haldun University. Istanbul, Türkiye
- T20** Orakçoğlu, M. (2022). Mevlevi tarikat kültüründe kıyafetler ve sembolik anlamları. Master thesis. Başkent University, Ankara, Türkiye.
- T21** Akpak, M.Y. (2022). Reflections of music in the thought of Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi. Doctoral dissertation. Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Sivas, Türkiye.
- T22** Kaya, F. (2023). Investigation of Mevlana museum in the context of psycho-social quality by age and gender. Master thesis. Karatay University, Konya, Türkiye.



Research Article

Sufi aesthetics and semiotics: reflections of Mevlana's Philosophy in the art of Mutluhan Taş

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Abstract

Sufism is a profound philosophical and spiritual approach centered on an individual's inner journey and quest for closeness to God. This understanding has profoundly influenced many artists throughout history who view art as a means of attaining truth. The symbolic language of Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, along with concepts such as love and "wahdat al-wujud" (the unity of being), has been pivotal in transforming Sufism into an aesthetic form. This study explores the impact of Mevlana's philosophy on modern art and its reflections in the works of artist Mutluhan Taş, thereby uncovering the place of Sufi aesthetics in contemporary art. Adopting a semiotic approach, the study seeks to analyze the meanings of symbolic expressions in art associated with Sufism. This article endeavors to illustrate the influence of Mevlana's Sufi philosophy on Mutluhan Taş's artworks and to reveal the role of Sufi thought in modern art. The research employs a qualitative methodology structured within the framework of semiotic analysis. Based on the theoretical foundations of Mevlevi and Sufi thought, it examines the symbols used in artistic works and their spiritual messages. Selected works by Mutluhan Taş, particularly those featuring Sufi symbols and metaphysical dimensions, such as "Fana Fillah" and "Post Sema-i," are analyzed in detail for their visual representation of Sufi philosophy. The artworks are examined through semiotic analysis, evaluating the Sufi meanings of the symbols and their effects on the viewer and exploring how Sufi aesthetics integrate with contemporary art practices. In Mutluhan Taş's works, Mevlana's philosophy, combined with fundamental Sufi themes such as love, unity, and existence, imbues a metaphysical dimension. The symbols in these works stand out as metaphors reflecting an individual's inner journey and effort to reach divine truth. This study sheds light on the relationship between Sufi aesthetics and contemporary art, contributing to understanding how modern artists interpret Sufi philosophy. It is suggested that future research could examine the reflections of Sufi aesthetics in other artistic disciplines.

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Introduction

Sufism is defined within the tradition of Islamic thought as a path and system of teachings aimed at self-awareness, spiritual purification, and closeness to God. "The foundation of Sufism lies in the belief that there is only one being in the universe, and all other entities are reflections of that singular being on Earth" (Zangeneh, 2013, p. 825). This

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perspective asserts that God manifests in everything and that humans aim to comprehend and unify with this truth. Sufi philosophy holds that attaining absolute happiness in this world and the hereafter is only possible through spiritual guidance (Irshad). In this context, Sufism emphasizes: "God calls all humans to spiritual guidance because He wishes for humans—His most beloved creation—to live in happiness in both this world and the afterlife. Without spiritual guidance, a person cannot escape the tyranny of their ignorant self and will find neither happiness nor contentment in either life" (Boran, 2017, p. 11).

Mevlana's philosophy of Sufism combines the understanding of divine truth with a profound aesthetic sensibility. This aesthetic approach transcends mere perceptions of beauty, aiming instead to express human love and devotion to God (Çetin & Yıldız, 2021, p. 15).

As a branch of philosophy, aesthetics investigates the nature of beauty, taste, and art. According to Ziss (2009), aesthetics is defined as "the philosophical science that studies the fundamental principles and laws of the aesthetic perception of reality by humans" (p. 214). Aesthetics involves visual pleasure and the analysis of deep meanings embedded within beauty and perception. Balcı explains that "aesthetics was first defined as the science of contemplation on beauty derived from sensory knowledge in the book *Aesthetica* by the German philosopher Baumgarten in 1970" (2004, p. 11).

Sufi aesthetics addresses the concepts of beauty and aesthetics within the framework of Sufi spiritual values and the quest for union with God. This approach does not view beauty merely as a worldly pleasure or aesthetic experience but as a means to comprehend the perfection, love, and unity created by God. In this context, beauty is regarded as a manifestation of God's attributes and creations, and traces of divine beauty are sought in every being. Historically, Sufism and art have influenced one another, with art serving as a medium for Sufi representatives to express their thoughts through poetry, discourse, and music. At the same time, Sufism, in turn, has been an inspiration for many artistic creations.

Pioneering figures such as Hallaj al-Mansur, Ibn Arabi, Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, and Yunus Emre played a significant role in advancing Sufi thought to its zenith during the 13th century. These Sufi ideas became a source of inspiration for many Turkish artists after the 1980s. National and religiously themed symbols and inscriptions during this period found expression in art as a conscious manifestation of a philosophical foundation (Alakuş, 1997, p. 66).

The Place of Mevlana's Philosophy in Art

Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, a prominent scholar and poet of the 13th century, succeeded in expressing the depth of Sufism through art. "Celaleddin Rumi, the unique orchestrator of the heavens and the one who inspires Divine Secrets through the language of angels, was born on October 30, 1207, corresponding to 6 Rabi' al-Awwal 604 in the Islamic calendar, in Balkh" (Nasr, 2017:158, as cited in Tuncer, 2019, p. 69). Mevlana, known to have been educated under the spiritual guidance of his father and grandfather, was the son of Muhammed Bahauddin Walad, renowned as the Sultan of Scholars (Yigitler, 2017, p. 15). After traveling across Turkistan and Arabia, he settled in Konya with his family, where he lived until his death.

Following Mevlana's death, his son Sultan Walad and his disciples established the foundations of "Mevleviyeh," a Sufi order defined by its quest for love and divine truth. This order is based on the belief in unifying with holy power and emphasizes love, tolerance, and the purification of the self as a path to reach God. "Mevlana's philosophy profoundly influenced Anatolian Seljuk's art and cultural structures. Mevleviyeh is a mystical teaching and a significant source that enriches the inner essence of art and literature" (Arslan, 1996, p. 72).

Mevlana's philosophy connects the individual's inner journey with art through rituals, symbols, and literary texts. During the 13th century, Mevlana and other mystics transformed Anatolia into a science and art center. "Mevleviyeh, particularly with its concept of Wahdat al-Wujud (the unity of being), deepened symbolic expression in artworks" (Ocak, 2000, p. 94). Mevlana's art and aesthetic philosophy continue to influence modern art. Love and Wahdat al-Wujud are prominently used as symbolic tools in contemporary artworks. These concepts demonstrate that art is not merely a visual medium but also a profound expression of a spiritual journey (Yazıcı, 2018, p. 62).

In Mevlana's philosophy, concepts like "love" and "Wahdat al-Wujud" (the unity of being) serve as symbolic expressions in art and inspire artists to delve into spiritual depths. Mevlana, who viewed art as a realm beyond imitation and depiction, left a lasting impact on classical and modern artists through his symbolic language, which added spiritual depth to art (Tuncer, 2019, p. 80). "Mevlana's art, independent of national identity, is considered a universal language based on love for humanity" (Halman, 2015, p. 125).

"Sema," frequently mentioned in Mevlana's poems and works, holds profound meaning for artists as a symbol of detachment from the material world and closeness to God. This symbol has been employed in various artistic forms, such as painting and sculpture, as a metaphor for inner journeys, effectively communicating the artist's spiritual quest to the audience. Sufi imagery often manifests in art as abstract representations, conveying the individual's ascension and love through symbols. As Abidin Dino states, Mevlana's spiritual world is about "shaping plasticity and revealing the essence hidden in words, the most secret sap, and the most intense force" (Dino, 2000, p. 176).

In line with Sufi knowledge, Mevlana considered art to guide the path to truth, reflecting God's beauty and love. Art expresses human love for God, the desire for unity with existence, and the quest for divine reality. "Mevlana's understanding of art forms the universal language of divine love and peace. His poetry and prose serve as the voice of the human soul, aiming to lead people to God" (Yousuf, Qadri & Osmanov, 2019, pp. 71-75).

The Works of Mutluhan Taş and Mevlana's Philosophy

Mutluhan Taş is a contemporary artist who shapes his works under the influence of Mevlana's philosophical depth and Sufism. Describing Mevlana as "a syncretist who harmoniously integrates diverse Sufi conceptions" (Taş, 2010, p. 27), the artist has produced works reflecting a similar stylistic understanding. His creations merge inner thought with abstract forms, offering viewers a space for spiritual contemplation. The symbolic elements observed in Taş's works are closely tied to Mevlana's "inner purification" philosophy and "self-awareness." The artist employs abstract and minimalist forms, transforming symbols into gateways that invite viewers on a spiritual journey.

The symbols used in Mutluhan Taş's works often convey Mevlana's Sufi philosophy to the audience through abstract arrangements. The frequent use of circular and spiral forms in Taş's works can be seen as symbols of Mevlana's sema rituals. These forms represent a detachment from the worldly and a movement toward an inner center, symbolizing unity with God. Such symbols provide the viewer with an experience of individual purification and a sense of harmony with the universal. The continuity observed in Taş's forms parallels Mevlana's philosophy: "Wherever we turn, we eventually turn toward Him" (Kuban, 2024, p. 24).

Abidin Dino reflects on the transformation of Mevlana's spiritual world into the material world through art, stating: "Celaleddin Rumi heard the hammer of a goldsmith and was enraptured by its rhythm. Mevlana's art is a symbolism oriented toward the material world; just as the hammer leaves an imprint on gold, the artist's soul reflects in their art" (Dino, 2000, p. 176). Semiotic analysis is crucial for understanding how Mevlana's symbols materialize in Taş's artistic practice and how they affect the audience.

Research Objective

The primary aim of this research is to examine the impact of Sufi aesthetic understanding on contemporary Turkish art. Specifically, the study analyzes how Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi's philosophy is a source of inspiration in contemporary Turkish art and how this philosophy is reflected in modern artworks through aesthetic elements. The research seeks to reveal the symbolic representations of Mevlana's Sufi values and aesthetic principles in the works of artists like Mutluhan Taş. By doing so, the study delves into the relationship between Sufi aesthetics and modern art, offering a deeper understanding of the interaction between these two domains.

Method

Research Design

A qualitative research method was adopted as the research design. The semiotic analysis method was the foundation for deciphering the meanings of symbols used in art. Document and artwork analysis methods were employed simultaneously during the research process. Selected works by Mutluhan Taş were meticulously examined for their

connections with Sufi aesthetics. The artist's abstract and minimalist creations inspired by Mevlana's philosophy were evaluated as primary documents for the analysis.

Semiotic analysis provides a valuable framework for understanding how spiritual values are reflected in art, mainly through symbols and metaphors. This method enables formal and contextual analysis of artistic works (Demir, 2019, p. 21).

Documents and Artworks

The research focused on Mutluhan Taş's Works, such as Tek Nefeste Aşk (Love in a Single Breath) and Post Sema. These pieces stand out as artistic expressions that convey Mevlana's philosophy through symbolic language. The artist was selected due to the direct relationship between the symbolic narratives in his works and Sufi values.

Analysis

Semiotic methods were applied during the analysis and supported by relevant sources. The symbols in the artworks were examined in connection with Sufi aesthetics and metaphysical values. Additionally, the spiritual messages conveyed by the artworks and their impact on viewers were evaluated.

Semiotics, as a discipline, studies the symbolic meaning of objects or expressions and the cultural and social contexts attached to those meanings. Emerging in the 20th century, semiotic theory "draws on the linguistic insights of Saussure, Barthes, Hjelmslev, and Martinet, adopting relevant concepts" (Aktulum, 2004:1, as cited in Güneş, 2013, p. 333). Semiotics investigates how sign systems influence societal and mental structures as semiotic frameworks. Particularly in the latter half of the 20th century, semiotics evolved to establish meaningful connections based on the observer's interpretation without deviating from the essence of the work. "According to Umberto Eco, every work of art requires a free and creative interpreter; without reinterpreting the work in alignment with the creative artist's vision, it is impossible to understand it truly" (Çağlar, 2012, p. 27).

The artist's series Tek Nefeste Aşk highlights indicators of Mevlana's symbol of love. "Mevlana defines love and spirituality as the ultimate purpose of the human soul. This love and spiritual quest are directly connected to art... Mevlana's aesthetic philosophy is rooted in the unity of love and beauty" (Yazıcı, 2012, p. 91). Through Mevlana's metaphorical language, love represents humanity's yearning to return to the Creator, a journey that begins with the divine breath at the origin of creation. In Sufism, breath is not only the source of life but also a means for humans to attain divine truth. Love, in turn, is the force that gives meaning to this breath, guiding individuals toward God and liberating them from worldly attachments.

In this series, considered a visual representation of Mevlana's tolerance and universal love, the artist employs unique artistic techniques while constructing a world of lines, shapes, and colors that transition from the external to the internal, often drawing from material culture elements. Large-scale canvases feature marbling art (ebru) overlaid with realistic depictions of dervishes, elders, tombstones, and inscriptions portrayed in their original forms (Enveroğlu, 2012).

Ethics

Ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout the research process, and the consent of all artists was obtained. The documents used were selected from publicly available materials shared by the artist. Care was taken to avoid manipulation or misrepresentation. In the study, Mutluhan Taş's works, such as Tek Nefeste Aşk (Love in One Breath) and Post Sema, have been analyzed. These works stand out as art pieces that express the philosophy of Mevlana in a symbolic language. The reason for selecting the artist is that the symbolic expression in his works is directly related to Sufi values.

Findings

The research findings indicate that Mutluhan Taş's works interpret Mevlana's philosophy through an aesthetic language. His artwork's circular and spiral forms metaphorically represent the inner journey and the quest for union with God. These findings are significant in highlighting the role of Sufi aesthetics in contemporary art.



Figure 1. Mutluhan Taş, Love in a Single Breath Series, “Fana Fillah,” 50x140 cm, Oil on Canvas, 2004

Mutluhan Taş's artwork *Fana Fillah* reinterprets Sufi aesthetics and the concept of divine love through a modern artistic language. In this piece, the artist presents the essence of Sufism's “fana fillah” concept to the audience through imagery. This concept, which includes the idea of “dying before death,” depicts transcending the self to reach God. In this context, the work offers an aesthetic experience and a profound space for philosophical inquiry.

Visual Narration and Key Semiotics of the Artwork

The images, colors, and composition used in the work reveal deep layers of Sufi meaning:

Background and Texture: The background, featuring a light green surface with dark circular textures, evokes the divine tranquility and infinity frequently mentioned in Sufism. Light green conveys a sense of metaphysical comfort and spiritual balance, while the circular textures symbolize God's universal order and unity. This choice demonstrates the artist's intent to deepen the layers of meaning in every aspect of the composition.

Figure Composition: Two prominent human figures in the foreground, depicted with closed eyes, represent divine submission and the shedding of worldly selfhood. One figure faces forward, and the other faces backward, symbolizing the contradictory yet complementary stages of an individual's inner journey. The closed eyes reflect detachment from worldly ties and the pursuit of truth, aligning with Mevlana's advice to “close your eyes to see” (Poyraz, 2014).

Whirling Dervishes: Eight whirling dervishes, extending from the bottom to the top of the artwork, symbolize the spiritual transformation and turning toward God emphasized in Sufism. Their motion suggests a cyclical journey, representing the human desire to transcend the inner self and reach the Creator (Halman, 2015).

Tulip Imagery: Positioned at the top, the tulip serves as a symbolic representation of Sufi aesthetics, reflecting the attributes of God. With its minimal and elegant design, the tulip symbolizes unity and wholeness. It also frequently appears as a metaphor in Mevlana's philosophy, carrying deep symbolic meaning within Sufi thought (Zangeneh, 2013).

Tombstones: The eight tombstones at the bottom of the artwork symbolize spiritual death and rebirth achieved through self-purification. These images highlight the transience of worldly life and the aspiration for truth in the Sufi journey (Dino, 2000).

Light green background Metaphysical tranquility and universal order

Table 1. Narrative and Technical Indicators of the Artwork “Fana Fillah”

Signifier	Signified
Dark circular textures	Infinity of divine love
Human figures	Purification of the self and turning toward the Creator
Whirling dervishes	Spiritual ascension and reaching divine love
Dark circular textures	Infinity of divine love
Tulip	Symbolic representation of God's attributes
Tombstones	Transience of life and the Sufi understanding of spiritual death

Analysis of the Work in Terms of Codes

Colors and Textures: The light green background expresses tranquility and spiritual balance, while the dark circular textures reference the omnipresent attributes of God (Balci, 2004). The interplay of these colors and textures strengthens the visual structure of the artwork.

Figures and Composition: The depiction of human figures from the shoulders upward refers to the process of detaching from worldly bonds. The balance of these figures within the composition visualizes the harmony and unity in Sufi aesthetics (Alakuş, 1997).

Metaphors and Symbols: The tulip and whirling dervish images symbolize divine love and truth. The tombstones reflect the human effort to transcend the self and turn toward the Creator. These symbols enrich the framework of Sufi philosophy through imagery (Taş, 2010).

Table 2. Sequential and Syntagmatic Structures in “Fana Fillah”

Sequential Dimension	Syntagmatic Dimension
Eight tombstones (bottom section)	Transience of life and liberation from worldly ties
Human figures (middle section)	Inner journey and divine love
Tulip (top section)	The pinnacle of reaching divine truth

Mythical Structure of the Text

The images, such as whirling dervishes and the tulip, evoke the themes of divine love and unity in Sufism. The concept of “wahdat al-wujud” (unity of being), frequently emphasized in Mevlana's philosophy, is symbolically reflected in this artwork (Tuncer, 2019).

Intertextuality

The artwork Fana Fillah combines metaphors from Sufi literature with contemporary art, offering viewers a new aesthetic experience. The rotational movement of the whirling dervishes represents Mevlana's pursuit of divine love and truth, while images such as the tulip and tombstones underscore the depth of Sufi thought (Halman, 2015).

Interpretation and Evaluation

This piece effectively blends contemporary art with Sufi aesthetics. The images and colors used in the artwork vividly convey the inner journey of the individual and the effort to reach God. Mutluhan Taş's Fana Fillah is a masterpiece that visually and philosophically conveys the profound meanings of Sufism to its audience.



Figure 2. Mutluhan Taş, Love in a Single Breath Series, “Post Sema-1,” 150x250 cm, Oil on Canvas, 2004

Mutluhan Taş's artwork *Post Sema-1* reshapes one of the core symbols in Mevlana's artistic philosophy, the "Sema" ritual, through the aesthetic expression of modern art. This piece reflects the profound meanings of the Mevlevi tradition on both visual and philosophical levels, offering viewers a unique spiritual dimension.

Visual Narration and Key Semiotics of the Artwork

Figure and Composition: The figure in the artwork, with its head tilted toward the right shoulder, depicts the humble and submissive stance of Mevlevi dervishes. Painted in muted green and brown tones, the figure evokes humility in earthly life and a spiritual journey. The figure's tightly wrapped robe symbolizes a desire for inner purification and protection (Dino, 2000).

Tombstones: The six tombstones rising in a wavy formation behind the figure represent the transience of worldly existence and the spiritual purification on the path to God. The orderly rise of the tombstones symbolizes the determination to persist on this journey (Boran, 2017).

Whirling Dervishes: The seven interconnected whirling dervishes depicted behind the tombstones symbolize the spiritual ascension and movement toward divine love emphasized in Mevlana's sema ritual. The spiral arrangement of the dervishes aligns with the frequently cited Sufi metaphor of "ascending through turning" (Halman, 2015).

Color Palette and Vertical Composition: Dominated by muted greens, browns, and light tones, the color palette conveys serenity and tranquility. The vertical composition represents the ascent toward divine love and the step-by-step progress of the spiritual journey, like climbing a staircase (Zangeneh, 2013).

Table 3. “Narrative and Technical Indicators of the Artwork “Post Sema-1”

Signifier	Signified
Figure with bowed head	Humility, submission, and inner journey
Muted green-brown tones	Spiritual tranquility and peace
Tombstones	Transience of earthly life and spiritual ascension
Spiral arrangement	Spiritual ascent and movement toward divine love
Whirling dervishes	Journey toward divine love and truth through sema

Analysis of the Artwork in Terms of Codes

Meaning of Vertical Composition: The vertically depicted figures and objects symbolize an ascent toward God and the distancing of the self from worldly existence. This composition visualizes the quest for divine unity at the core of Sufi philosophy (Tuncer, 2019).

Spiral Arrangement and Motion: The spiral arrangement of the tombstones and whirling dervishes symbolizes the transformation and effort toward truth in the individual's inner journey. This motion relates to Mevlana's saying, "Sema is the art of turning toward God" (Yousuf, Qadri & Osmanov, 2019).

Figure and Details: The bowed head represents submission and humility, while the tightly wrapped robe signifies detachment from worldly ties. These details play a significant role in the symbolic representation of Sufi thought (Alakuş, 1997).

Table 4. "Sequential and Syntagmatic Structures in "Post Sema-1"

Sequential Dimension	Syntagmatic Dimension
Tombstones at the bottom	Transience of earthly existence
Figure in the middle section	Spiritual purification and turning toward God
Whirling dervishes at the top	Ascension to divine love and unity

Mythical Structure of the Text

The artwork Post Sema-1 reinterprets the spiritual concepts of Mevlana's sema ritual through symbols. The spiral arrangement of the whirling dervishes visualizes Mevlana's philosophy: "To turn is to discover the secret of the universe's creation" (Balci, 2004).

Intertextuality

This piece by Mutluhan Taş directly connects with the concepts and sema ritual described in Mevlana's Masnavi. The spiral ascension of the figures reflects Mevlana's universal understanding of unity, expressed through a contemporary artistic language (Poyraz, 2014).

Interpretation and Evaluation

Post Sema-1 offers a structure that reshapes Sufi aesthetics with a modern approach. By harmonizing the same ritual with the aesthetic arrangement of figures and symbols, Taş provides viewers with a visual and spiritual experience. The imagery and composition in the artwork effectively reflect Mevlana's understanding of striving for truth and divine love.



Figure 3. Mutluhan Taş, Masnavi Stories Series, "The Collar," 50x35 cm, Mixed Media on Canvas, 2005

Mutluhan Taş's *The Collar* from the *Masnavi Stories Series* visually reinterprets Mevlana's philosophy, calling humanity spiritual unity. Through its color and figure arrangements, this artwork conveys the fundamental concepts of Sufism to the viewer.

Visual Narration and Key Semiotics of the Artwork

Central Composition: The central figure in the artwork represents Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi. This figure is emphasized in size and position, depicted in connection with the surrounding figures. This visualizes Mevlana's role as a spiritual leader (Poyraz, 2014).

Surrounding Human Figures: The artwork depicts twelve distinct figures surrounding Mevlana. Although they face different directions, they are geometrically connected to Mevlana, symbolizing the philosophy of "Come, whoever you are" (Halman, 2015).

Use of Color: The red tones at the bottom of the composition symbolize worldly desires and struggles, while the brown and green tones spreading upward express spiritual serenity and purification (Boran, 2017).

Geometric Forms: The connections between the figures symbolize unity and humanity's shared journey. These symbolic connections indicate Sufi philosophy's search for divine unity (Dino, 2000).

Table 5. Narrative and Technical Indicators of The Collar

Signifier	Signified
Central large figure	Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi
Twelve surrounding figures	Humanity's connection and orientation toward Mevlana
Red tones	Worldly desires and struggles
Brown and green tones	Spiritual tranquility and peace
Geometric connections	Humanity's unity within divine oneness

Analysis of the Artwork in Terms of Codes

Central and Peripheral Relations: The connections between the central figure and the surrounding figures symbolize the universality of Mevlana's philosophy and its embrace of all humanity (Tuncer, 2019).

Emotional Significance of Colors: Red represents the complexity and challenges of worldly desires, while brown and green symbolize the peace and serenity of the Sufi journey (Zangeneh, 2013).

Geometric Arrangement: The geometric connections between the figures emphasize the understanding of divine unity and humanity's spiritual journey (Yousuf, Qadri & Osmanov, 2019).

Table 6. Sequential and Syntagmatic Structures in The Collar

Sequential Dimension	Syntagmatic Dimension
Central figure	Mevlana's spiritual guidance and centrality
Surrounding human figures	Humanity's connection and orientation toward Mevlana
Red tones at the bottom	Worldly desires and struggles
Green tones spreading upward	Spiritual tranquility and peace
Geometric connections	Unity and the shared journey in Sufism

Mythical Structure of the Text

The Collar embodies Mevlana's philosophy of "Come, whoever you are." The central figure and surrounding people symbolize Sufi philosophy's universal unity and human diversity. In this sense, the artwork offers visual and philosophical depth (Poyraz, 2014).

Intertextuality

This artwork directly connects with Mevlana's Masnavi, precisely his philosophy of "Come, whoever you are." The differing identities and orientations of the surrounding figures visually represent the universal call emphasized in the Masnavi. The geometrically connected figures express Mevlana's belief in the spiritual unity of humanity, rendered through a contemporary artistic language.

This context ties the piece directly to passages from the Masnavi, such as: "With the poison flowing from the needle of envy, he saddened others to their very souls" (Masnavi, 1/438, as cited by Özdengül, 2005). The central figure

representing Mevlana reflects the Sufi philosophy of universal leadership and visually embodies the phrase: "The sweet comfort ended, a cold wind blew" (Masnavi, 1/746, as cited by Özdengül, 2005).

Interpretation and Evaluation

The Collar from the Masnavi Stories Series can be seen as a visual interpretation of Sufi thought through modern art. The central figure representing Mevlana invites the viewer on a profound spiritual journey. The combination of red and green tones highlights the coexistence of worldly struggles and spiritual peace. Taş's artwork reshapes Mevlana's unifying philosophy with striking aesthetics, encouraging viewers to contemplate Sufi.



Figure 4. Mutluhan Taş, Masnavi Stories Series, "If You Have a Goal, You Exist," 50x35 cm, Mixed Media on Canvas, 2005

Mutluhan Taş's *If You Have a Goal, You Exist* from the Masnavi Stories Series interprets the spiritual significance of the ney (reed flute) symbol in Sufism on an aesthetic plane. Through symbols such as the ney and the circle, the artwork narrates the human journey toward divine love.

Visual Narration and Key Semiotics of the Artwork

Ney Symbol: The ney symbolizes divine communication and the path to God in Sufism at the artwork's center. The depiction of the ney resembling a dervish's headgear emphasizes the spiritual process of becoming the "perfect human" (*insan-ı kâmil*) (Çetinkaya, 2019).

Circle Symbol: The circle through which the ney passes represents God's unity and divine truth. The division of the circle into four parts signifies the four stages in Sufi philosophy (Boran, 2017).

Use of Color and Texture: The dark brown and green tones represent the union of earthly and spiritual elements. These tones evoke tranquility and serenity in the context of Sufism (Halman, 2015).

Spiral Arrangement: The spiral arrangement around the circle and ney symbolizes the human journey and transformation toward God (Yousuf, Qadri & Osmanov, 2019).

Table 7. Narrative and technical indicators of if you have a goal, you exist

Signifier	Signified
Ney	Divine communication and turning toward God
Circle	God's unity and divine truth
Four sections of the circle	Representation of the four spiritual stages
Spiral arrangement	Spiritual ascension and transformation
Dark brown and green tones	Spiritual tranquility and serenity

Analysis of the Artwork in Terms of Codes

Relationship Between Ney and Circle: Combining the ney and the circle represents the process of reaching divine unity in Sufism and symbolizes the human connection with God (Tuncer, 2019).

Spiritual Message of Colors: The colors used in the artwork visualize the tranquility and serenity of the Sufi journey, expressing the human effort to transcend earthly struggles and turn toward God (Zangeneh, 2013).

Spiral Arrangement and Movement: The spiral arrangement symbolizes humanity's transformation and spiritual journey, reflecting Mevlana's ascension metaphor through turning (Poyraz, 2014).

Table 8. Sequential and syntagmatic structures in if you have a goal, you exist

Sequential Dimension	Syntagmatic Dimension
Ney and circle	Symbols of the spiritual journey
Four sections of the circle	Representation of the spiritual stages
Dark color tones	Spiritual tranquility and serenity
Spiral arrangement	Spiritual ascension and turning toward divine love

Mythical Structure of the Text

If You Have a Goal, You Exist visualizes the core philosophy of Sufism through the symbols of the ney and the circle. These symbols reflect the transformation and spiritual quest of humans turning toward God. The artwork offers both visual and philosophical depth (Poyraz, 2014).

Intertextuality

This piece represents Mevlana's philosophy of divine love, symbolized by the ney and the human journey to becoming the perfect human (insan-ı kâmil). The ney's symbolic depiction conveys the journey of reaching God through art. Symbols like the circle and spiral arrangement align with Mevlana's understanding of "universal unity." The artwork emphasizes the process of turning toward divine truth, connecting indirectly with Hallaj's philosophy of "Wahdat al-Wujud" (Unity of Being) (Çetinkaya, 2019).

Interpretation and Evaluation

If You Have a Goal, You Exist offers a structure that reshapes Sufi thought and aesthetics through the lens of contemporary art. The combination of the ney and circle powerfully conveys the human journey toward God on both a visual and philosophical plane. The dark tones and spiral arrangement draw viewers into this spiritual journey. By reinterpreting Mevlana's Sufi philosophy in a modern context, Taş's artwork provides a profound experience of meaning and aesthetics.



Figure 5. Mutluhan Taş, Hallaj al-Mansur Series, "The Point of Tasin," 100x130 cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2011

Mutluhan Taş's *The Point of Tasin* interprets Sufi aesthetics through a symbolic lens. Inspired by the thoughts of Hallaj al-Mansur, a significant figure in Islamic mysticism, the artwork captivates viewers with its simplicity and balance. The use of calligraphy and symbols in the piece offers a metaphysical journey to its audience.

Visual Narration and Key Semiotics of the Artwork

Division of Composition: The artwork is vertically divided into two halves. The left side features complex dark red calligraphy, referencing the deep and rich textual tradition of Sufism. On the right side, a simple gold background contains the letter “waw,” symbolizing trust in and turning toward God (Boran, 2017).

The Letter “Waw”: In Islamic mysticism, “waw” symbolizes humility and submission. Its placement in the lower-right corner represents the spiritual journey from its beginning to its culmination (Halman, 2015).

Point and Line: The point at the top of the dividing line symbolizes the unity of God and the interconnectedness of all creation to this oneness in Islamic mysticism. This point can be associated with the metaphysical meaning of Hallaj al-Mansur’s statement, “I am the Truth,” as it reflects the balance between existence and nonexistence (Poyraz, 2014).

Table 9. Narrative and technical indicators of the point of tasin

Signifier	Signified
Complex calligraphy	Depth and richness of the Sufi textual tradition
Gold background	Spiritual purity and the divine light of God
“Waw” letter	Turning toward God, submission, and humility
Vertical line	Metaphysical connection between existence and nonexistence
Point	Unity of God and the source of creation

Analysis of the Artwork in Terms of Codes

Contrast Between the Two Halves: The left side’s complex calligraphy represents the multilayered structure of earthly life and the human quest for spirituality. In contrast, the right side’s simple “waw” and blank gold background symbolize the human effort to attain spiritual tranquility (Zangeneh, 2013).

Significance of Gold: The spiritual meaning of gold in Sufism reflects the divine light of God. The background underscores the human struggle to transcend worldly life and reach divine illumination (Yousuf, Qadri & Osmanov, 2019).

Relationship Between “Waw” and the Point: While the “waw” symbolizes God’s greatness and human humility, the point represents God’s existence and absolute unity. Together, these elements directly connected to the Sufi concept of wahdat al-wujud (unity of being) (Tuncer, 2019).

Table 10. Sequential and syntagmatic structures in the point of tasin

Sequential Dimension	Syntagmatic Dimension
Complex calligraphy on the left	Earthly chaos and spiritual quest
Gold background and “waw”	Spiritual purity and submission to God
Point	Balance between existence and nonexistence

Mythical Structure of the Text

The Point of Tasin can be interpreted as referencing Hallaj al-Mansur’s mystical philosophy, particularly his concept of “Ana al-Haqq” (I am the Truth). The symbols in the artwork represent the coexistence of existence and nonexistence and the human effort to comprehend this balance. While the point symbolizes the unity of God in creation, the “waw” letter depicts the human inclination toward God (Alakuş, 1997).

Intertextuality

This artwork draws inspiration from the thoughts of Hallaj al-Mansur and the symbols of Islamic mysticism. The complex calligraphy reflects the rich content of Sufi texts, while the “waw” and point establish connections with Mevlana’s philosophy of unity and humility (Poyraz, 2014).

Interpretation and Evaluation

The Point of Tasin presents Sufi aesthetics with a minimalist approach, inviting viewers to engage in spiritual introspection. Combining complex and straightforward elements effectively visualizes the human transition from

worldly chaos to spiritual purity. Taş's artwork serves as a modern reinterpretation of Mevlana's and Hallaj al-Mansur's philosophies, offering the audience a profound experience of meaning and aesthetics.



Figure 6: Mutluhan Taş, Hallaj al-Mansur Series, “In Honor of Hallaj,” 100x130 cm, Acrylic on Canvas, 2011

Mutluhan Taş's *In Honor of Hallaj* is a visual homage to the philosophical and mystical thoughts of Hallaj al-Mansur, one of the cornerstones of Islamic mysticism. Through metaphorical storytelling, the artist presents Hallaj's “Ana al-Haq” (I am the Truth) philosophy and the suffering endured for this belief.

Visual Narration and Key Semiotics of the Artwork

The Letter “Elif” and the Circle: The dark green tones in the background symbolize a spiritual void, while the central Elif letter represents the unity and greatness of God. The delicate circular form behind it signifies infinity and completeness in Sufism (Kuban, 2024).

Red Mark and Calligraphy: The vivid red stain on the left side of the composition symbolizes blood, sacrifice, and the hardships Hallaj al-Mansur endured for his Sufi values. The inscriptions on the stain evoke the mystical and profound meanings of Sufism (Ağırman & Bekalp, 2012).

Minimalist Expression: The placement of symbols, though simple, carries profound meanings, echoing Hallaj's powerful yet humble stance on the path of mysticism.

Table 11. Narrative and technical indicators of in honor of Hallaj

Signifier	Signified
Elif letter	God's greatness, unity, and human devotion to Him
Circular form	Infinity, completeness, and a metaphor for the Sema
Red mark	Sacrifice, suffering, and Hallaj al-Mansur's struggles
Dark green background	Spiritual void, depth, and the human inner journey
Inscriptions on the red mark	Mystical and multi-layered meanings of Sufism

Analysis of the Artwork in Terms of Codes

Contrast Between Elif and Red Elements: The Elif letter, paired with the circular form, symbolizes divine unity and infinite truth. In contrast, the red marks and inscriptions reflect human sacrifices to reach spiritual enlightenment (Zangeneh, 2013).

Spiritual Significance of Green and Red: The dark green background symbolizes depth and inner reflection, while the red emphasizes the pain and sacrifices integral to the Sufi path (Yousuf, Qadri & Osmanov, 2019).

Elif and Circle Relationship: The Elif letter embodies human devotion to God, and the circle behind it symbolizes divine truth's eternal and infinite nature. These two elements align with the Sufi concept of *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of being) (Tuncer, 2019).

Table 12. Sequential and Syntagmatic Structures in In Honor of Hallaj

Sequential Dimension	Syntagmatic Dimension
Elif letter and circular form	Divine unity and infinity
Red mark and inscriptions	Sacrifice and mystical meanings of Sufism
Dark green background	Spiritual void and inner journey

Mythical Structure of the Text

Honor of Hallaj directly connects to Hallaj al-Mansur's "Ana al-Haq" philosophy. This narrative conveys the closeness between human and divine existence and the unity of being. While the Elif letter symbolizes human submission to God and the ultimate goal of this devotion, the red marks and inscriptions reflect the hardships and sacrifices of this journey (Poyraz, 2014).

Intertextuality

This artwork connects with Hallaj al-Mansur's mystical philosophy and Mevlana's Sema rituals. While the Elif letter and circular form resonate with Mevlana's interpretation of the Sema, the red mark symbolizes Hallaj's suffering and perseverance in his mystical quest (Zangeneh, 2013).

Interpretation and Evaluation

In Honor of Hallaj visualizes Sufi aesthetics and the spiritual journey of a pivotal figure in Islamic intellectual history using a contemporary artistic language. The artwork invites viewers into reflection and introspection by juxtaposing minimalistic elements with profound meanings. This piece exemplifies how simplicity in expression can convey layered, intricate meanings while fostering a deep engagement with the viewer's inner spiritual journey.

Conclusion

Mutluhan Taş's works stand out for their contemporary reinterpretation of Mevlana's Sufi philosophy and aesthetic symbolism through modern artistic language. These works visualize the core concepts of Sufi philosophy—such as the individual's inner journey, the pursuit of truth, and turning toward divine love—through a metaphysical and artistic perspective. Evaluated through the lens of semiotic analysis, the pieces bring together Mevlana's wahdat al-wujud (unity of being) philosophy and Hallaj al-Mansur's "Ana al-Haq" (I am the Truth) concept using color palettes, geometric arrangements, and metaphors.

Spiral forms symbolize humanity's journey toward God and the constant motion within this pursuit. The richness of the colors and textures emphasizes transitions between spiritual tranquility and worldly chaos. For instance, red symbolizes sacrifice and the challenges of the spiritual journey, while circular forms express God's unity and infinity. Beyond being aesthetically pleasing, these artworks carry profound spiritual messages, inviting viewers on an inner journey.

Mutluhan Taş's works successfully merge the philosophies of Mevlana and Hallaj al-Mansur with modern art, creating a timeless layer of meaning. Mevlana's "Come, whoever you are" philosophy is visualized through multiple figures and tones, while Hallaj al-Mansur's "Ana al-Haq" statement is expressed in abstract metaphysical elements and symbols. Spiral arrangements and other visual elements communicate the metaphors of turning and reaching truth in Sufism through a contemporary aesthetic, offering an inspiring artistic experience for viewers.

The geometric forms, symbols, and texts used in the works bridge the traditional and the modern by blending Sufi aesthetics with abstract expression. In this regard, Mutluhan Taş's works serve as an exemplary medium for conveying the universal messages of Sufi thought through the language of art. The pieces provide a visual feast and function as a spiritual exploration and purification tool, transforming viewers.

Recommendations

Suggestions for Future Studies

Sufi Art and Modernism: Further exploration of the interaction between Sufi aesthetics and modern art can be undertaken. Comparisons of how Sufi thought is reflected in the art of different cultures may yield insightful results.

Semiotic Analysis: A more comprehensive analysis of the symbols used in Sufi artworks through semiotic methods can deepen the understanding of Sufi philosophy's impact on art.

Art and Social Messages: Investigations into how Sufi aesthetics can be employed as a language of art to address contemporary social issues could provide valuable insights.

Suggestions for Practitioners

Sufism in Art Education: Introducing courses on Sufi aesthetics and symbols into art education curricula can give young artists a unique perspective.

Social Awareness Projects: Sufi aesthetics can be utilized in art projects that promote spiritual values. Such projects may serve as practical tools for raising awareness through social campaigns.

Artist Workshops and Exhibitions: Inspired by artists like Mutluhan Taş, Sufi-themed exhibitions and artist workshops can be organized. These events could showcase Sufi art's aesthetic and spiritual richness to art enthusiasts and broader audiences.

Limitations

This study has certain limitations. First, the research focuses solely on selected works of Mutluhan Taş, excluding a broader range of artists and artworks within the context of Sufi aesthetics. This restricts the generalizability of the findings. Second, the analyses were conducted using a semiotic approach, leaving out additional findings that could have been obtained through other analytical methods. Third, the documents used during the research process were limited to the artist's publicly available materials, excluding access to private documents or direct interviews with the artist, which could have provided a more in-depth examination. Finally, the interpretation of the artworks was shaped by the researcher's expertise and perspective, meaning that other researchers may provide alternative interpretations.

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Visual Bibliography

- Figure 1.** Mutluhan Taş, Love in a Single Breath Series, “Fana Fillah” (2004). Artist's private collection.
- Figure 2.** Mutluhan Taş, Love in a Single Breath Series, “Post Sema-ı” (2004). Artist's private collection.
- Figure 3.** Mutluhan Taş, Masnavi Stories Series, “The Collar” (2005). Artist's private collection.
- Figure 4.** Mutluhan Taş, Masnavi Stories Series, “If You Have a Goal, You Exist” (2005)-Artist's private collection.
- Figure 5.** Mutluhan Taş, Hallaj al-Mansur Series, “The Point of Tasin” (2011). Artist's private collection.
- Figure 6.** Mutluhan Taş, Hallaj al-Mansur Series, “In Honor of Hallaj”



Book Review

An analysis of the book titled *Avrupalı Gezginlerin Gözüyle Osmanlılarda Musiki (Music in the Ottoman Court through the Eyes of European Travelers)* in terms of Mevlevi music

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Abstract

"Avrupalı Gezginlerin Gözüyle Osmanlılarda Musiki" (Music in the Eyes of European Travelers in the Ottoman Court) titled book consists of seven chapters. The book covers a period of four centuries, from the fifteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, during which European travelers made cultural journeys to cities governed by the Ottoman Empire. These journeys resulted in the production of memoirs, diaries, travel notes, and letters. It is understood that these travelers were at a certain cultural and intellectual level. What particularly caught my attention in this book is the simplistic descriptions of the Mevlevi ceremonies, music, and instruments by foreign travelers. It is important that the book addresses these aspects. The introduction of the concept of Mevlevi Music in the examination of the Sema ceremonies is also an important issue. I have provided a roadmap for researchers by examining all the chapters of the book from the perspective of Mevlevi Music. I specifically included examples. I recommend it as a source that Mevlevi music researchers can benefit from.

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Author(s): Bülent Aksoy
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The reason for reviewing this book is that the music played during the Sema ceremonies, along with the instruments and compositions, is presented by foreign travelers in a straightforward manner, providing not only an account but also a transfer of knowledge. Due to its emergence in the Sema ceremonies, it is referred to as Mevlevi music.

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The book titled "Music in the Eyes of European Travelers in the Ottoman Court" contains memoirs, diaries, letters, and travel notes shared by European travelers about their journeys in Ottoman lands over a period of four centuries, from the fifteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century. In this book, Aksoy shares the information obtained from sources published in Europe.

Europeans, starting with the administration of the Ottoman state, followed with great interest the history of the Turks, their military system, state governance, societal structure, and understanding of law. In addition, they also explored Turkish customs, language, and cultural structures. They particularly investigated Turkish music, which they found to be distinct. Travelers who visited Istanbul and other major cities made a concerted effort to understand musical examples, especially Sufism and Mevlevi music, and aimed to document them in their memoirs, travel accounts, and observations, ensuring they could be understood in their home countries as well.

Chapter I. Early Observations: Fifteenth – Sixteenth Century Travelogues (Pages 26-53)

Early observations are composed of selected excerpts from fifteenth and sixteenth-century travelogues. The relations between Europeans and Turks and Muslims began with the Crusades and were documented over centuries in travel accounts. The information collected from these travelers did not reveal notable works regarding the Turks. Travelers going to Palestine through Anatolia did not make any significant efforts to explore this country. The reason for this indifference was that their main interests were focused on the Holy Land.

In the subheading for the fifteenth century, information about Turkish music was found from two travelers. The first European book to mention Turkish music, published in 1982, is *La Voyage d'Outremer* by Charles Schefer. The author, Bertrandon de la Brocquière (1459), was a diplomat sent to the Ottoman Empire, and his writings reflect impressions from 1433.

In the section on the sixteenth century, *mehter* (Ottoman military band): Geuffroy, Menavino, and Dernschwam, it is noted that many sixteenth-century travelogues mention Turkish music and the instruments used. The Mehter team in the palace is also described. Information from this period also mentions the Mehter team's drumming. Dernschwam's travelogue is the first to describe all the instruments in the Mehter band.

In the section titled *chango, tambura, and gayda* from the sixteenth century, the oldest travelogue from this period is Guillaume Postel's *De la Republique des Turcs* from the 1530s. Postel describes how girls dance to the music of the chango band. Another important sixteenth-century travelogue about Turkish music is by Pierre Belon du Mans. Belon describes in detail the *misqal, ney, rebab, zurna, daf, cymbals*, and various string instruments he saw and heard. He also mentions that the string instruments used in these instruments had *kirish* (gut) strings. It is also noted that during the reign of Sultan Süleyman (Kanuni), a short period of music prohibition was imposed, which we learn from the letters of the Austrian ambassador Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, who was in Istanbul between 1554-1562.

Although the reason is unclear, European travelers in the sixteenth century did not mention Mevlevi music in their travelogues.

Chapter II. Initial Materials: Seventeenth Century (Pages 54-85)

In the seventeenth century, the familiarity of Europeans with Turkish music can be observed. In the memoirs of this period's travelers, criticisms of the monophonic performance of the Mehter (Ottoman military band) and other instrumental groups in Turkish music are noted. While Mevlevi music was not mentioned in the sixteenth-century travelogues, it occupies a prominent place in the seventeenth-century travelogues. At the beginning of this century, travelers who wrote about Mevlevi music include Thomas Coryate in 1613 and Pietro Della Valle in 1614, who both mention listening to music at the Galata Mevlevihanesi in their travelogues. Apart from Della Valle, Du Loir, in his letters published in 1645, writes about the instruments played in the Mevlevi ceremony and the whirling dervishes, and also notes the music for the third section of the Sema ceremony (Page 61). These notes are presented in the documents section of Aksoy's book (on Page 381). Dr. Covell, an English diplomat, and James Dallaway, in their memoirs, describe the instruments played in the Mevlevi tekkes, including the metal-stringed tambur, santur, rebab, and ney (Page 72).

Observers such as Paul Rycaut also wrote about Mevlevi music, providing valuable information on the Sema ceremony and contributing to documentation on the subject. This chapter mentions the Mevlevi ceremony observed

by Du Loir. In his letters, Du Loir also provides a detailed description of the tambur. He also mentions the kemençe (a string instrument) in his travelogues. This section also includes the travelogues of Nicolas Rolamb and Ali Ufki.

In this chapter, Aksoy directly quotes Abdülbâkî Gölpınarlı's words on Mevlana (Pages 77-78). Gölpınarlı, who made valuable observations on Mevlana, is quoted as follows in the book:

“Mevlevi have not studied Mevlana's personality, tastes, human side, way of life, and most naturally, his works, which would indicate these qualities. This is quite natural because they only emphasized etiquette, customs, and in this context, music, and saw Mevlana through a mystical perspective. In fact, they did not see the real Mevlana but the one they created in their imagination. Even the commentators who attempted to explain masterpieces like the *Mesnevi*, a pinnacle of world literature, did not feel the need to read Mevlana's other works” (Aksoy, 2003, Pages 77-78).

It would be accurate to consider that Aksoy also addresses Mevlana in this context.

Chapter III. Eighteenth Century: Towards Turkish Music (Pages 86-193)

In the seventeenth century, travelers found Mevlevi music more listenable than Mehter (the Ottoman military band). In the eighteenth century, Turkish music became quite intriguing to travelers, Orientalists, and music researchers. In this century, Mevlevi music and the instruments used to perform it were taken very seriously.

This period marked a time when Europeans researched Turkish music in detail. We also see that they found Turkish music enjoyable and made comments about it. This century was also a time when music developed. Many of the quintessential examples of Ottoman-Turkish style were written during this period. It is worth noting that this century was also a time of development for European music. The French jurist M. Guer speaks very highly of Mehter. Toderini finds Mehter very magnificent. In sources from the eighteenth century, the engravings compiled by Filippo Bonanni also include instruments used in Turkish music. In addition to Bonanni, Ferriol and Charles Fanton also contributed influential engravings, paintings, and information on Turkish instruments. Charles Fonton is one of the European observers most interested in Turkish music. Fonton's manuscript study titled *An Essay on Eastern Music in Comparison with European Music* was written in 1751. In this serious research, Fonton provides significant information about Turkish music scales, rhythms, the construction technique, materials, and tunings of the instruments.

Particularly, Fonton included illustrations of the instruments along with Turkish music pitch tables. Additionally, he wrote the musical notes of the works played.

Poul Rycout, in a painting published during this period titled *Mevlevi Musicians* (Picture 14, Page 63), shows images of musicians playing the ney (reed flute) and bendir (frame drum) (Page 97).

In the last notes of this century, there is a brief anecdote titled *Music in the Palace and Mevlevihanes* (Mevlevi lodges). In this anecdote, it is mentioned that Mevlevi dervishes would wait for musicians in their individual cells at the Mevlevihanes and hold musical meetings.

Chapter IV. Nineteenth Century: The Blockage of the Path

This century marked a period when Orientalism developed and established itself as a new field of study. European Orientalism was seen as a scientific discipline aimed at researching the histories, languages, thoughts, and cultures of Eastern countries. Some researchers have noted the use of Turkish instruments in Egypt. During this period, Turkish instruments were again discussed. This time, the instruments were analyzed in a scientific manner. Works appeared that discussed the tuning systems, notes, and characteristics of the instruments in detail. This period also marked a time when the lyrics, modes, and notes of the Mevlevi ceremonies were taken seriously.

One of the most significant events of this century was when the German translator at the Ottoman embassy in Istanbul, Hr. Von Hussard, memorized the *Mesnevi* of Mevlana Celaleddin. Later, this *Mesnevi* was translated into German and notated by the Austrian priest Maximilian Stadler and published in 1822. The works Stadler transcribed are found in the documents section, on pages 406-410. The works transcribed include a section from the *Hicaz Mevlevi Sema*, a section from the *Nihavend Mevlevi Sema*, a section from the *Acem Buselik Mevlevi Sema*, a section from the *Pençgah Mevlevi Sema*, a section from the *Bayati Mevlevi Sema*, and a section from three different *Hicaz Mevlevi Sema* ceremonies. Also, in this section, there is an illustration on page 238, image 72, showing Kanuni (Suleiman the Magnificent), neyzen (reed flutist), and semazen (whirling dervishes), painted by William J. J. Spry.

In the nineteenth century, in the section titled *Mevlevi Ceremony*, John P. Brown, a clerk and translator at the American Embassy in Istanbul, elaborately described the Mevlevi Sema ceremony. This document serves as a reference for the organization of the Mevlevi ceremony.

Chapter V. A Few Observations on the Place of Music in Everyday Life in Ottoman Society

In this section, the author examines the role of music in Ottoman society in light of the gathered information: Who performed music? Who listened to it? Where was music performed and listened to? What were the Ottomans' attitudes toward music? The social aspects and culture of music are discussed.

Chapter VI. Reception of Music and Conclusions

The author has produced this work by scanning Western sources that are the result of observations in the travelogues from four centuries. In this study, the author presents their work in a vertical chronological order so that the selected data can be traced within the historical course of the changes in music, both from the perspectives of European travelers and other observers.

As a result, the sources based on observation until the late eighteenth century contain a vast amount of material on Turkish music. However, the author's opinion is that these views have not been adequately addressed by music historians, musicologists, and Orientalists working on the nineteenth century. It is believed that the importance of travel literature was only understood in the twentieth century.

Chapter VII. Documents

A. Selected Texts

B. Tables

C. Musical Notations

This chapter consists of the selected texts, documents, and musical notations explained above.

Examples related to the visuals and notations in the book



Depiction of the person playing the ney and bendir. Page 63

Musical notations of the work transcribed by Du Loir. Page 381.

Some of the musical notations of the Mevlevi Sema works transcribed by Stadler. A section from the Nihavend Mevlevi Sema by Muhâsîp Seyd Ahmed Ağa. Page 406

A section from the Acem Buselik Mevlevi Sema. Page 407

A section from the Pengâh Mevlevi Sema. Page 407

A section from the Bayatî Mevlevi Sema. Page 407

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